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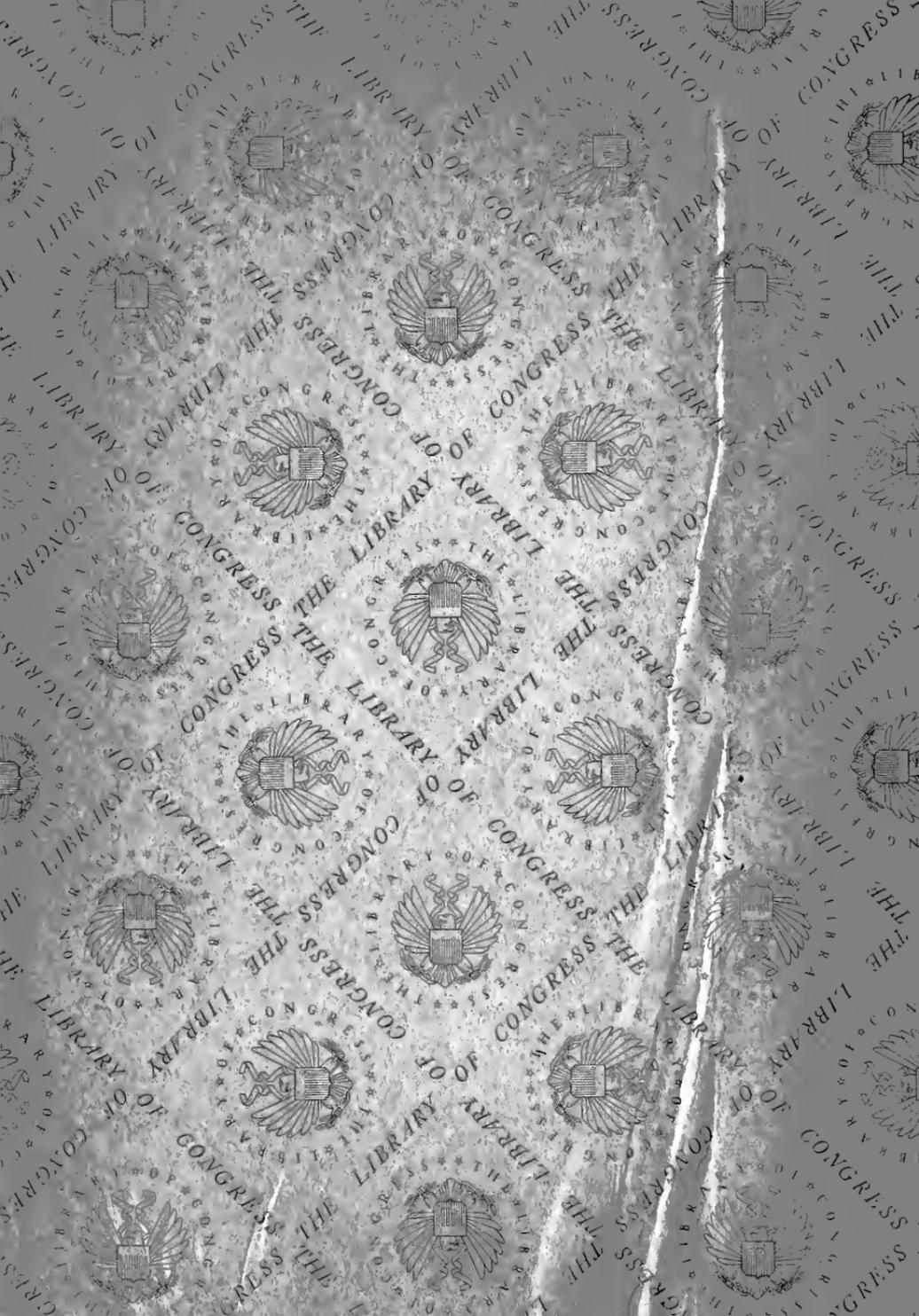
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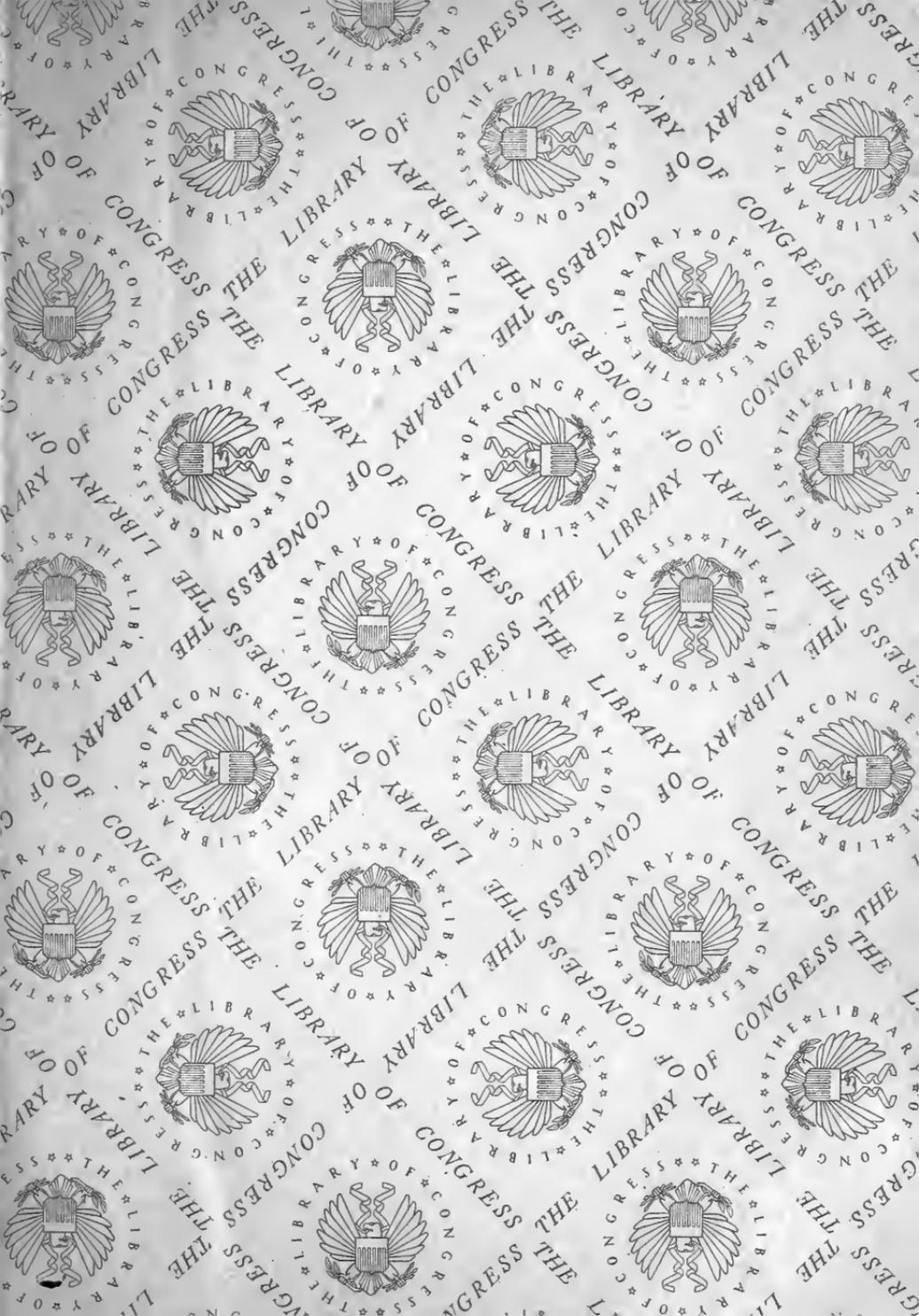
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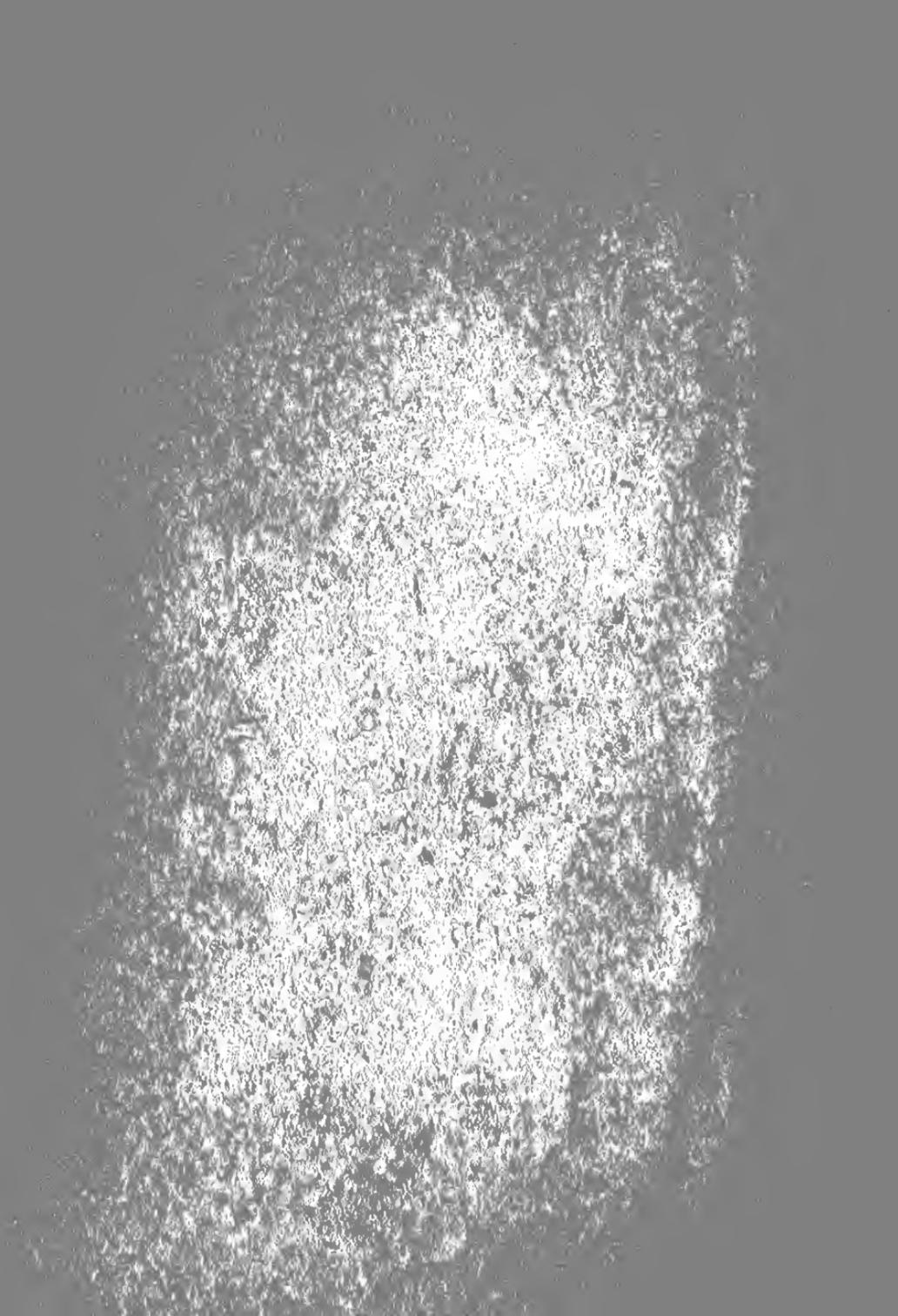
SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

MAXCY







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SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

Shakespeare, William
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HAMLET

A Study for Classes in English Literature

BY

CARROLL LEWIS MAXCY

MAR 5 1892

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BOSTON, U.S.A.

GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

1892

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TO

My life-long Friend

The Rev. Louis Norman Booth,

this little volume is dedicated

as a token of respect

for his broad scholarship, and his deep appreciation

of Classic Literature



P R E F A C E.



UNTIL recently, Shakespeare's plays have been taught like Cæsar's Commentaries and Xénophon's Anabasis ; in many cases with the same unfortunate result. The young student of Shakespeare, unless gifted with a phenomenal appreciation of historical research and critical analysis, has been brought to regard the works of the poet as a schoolroom bugbear. As in the study of the ancient classics, so in the classic English, the main object — if indeed not the sole object — has been critical *notes, notes, always notes*, until, save for mechanical purposes, the text might have been omitted and not missed.

Lately, however, with the inquiries into methods and principles of teaching, there has come the realization that this system is wrong, — and harmful as well ; that the young student of Shakespeare is not to “cram,” for examination purposes, data about the early editions, but that he is to learn to love the writings of the poet for their own sake.

This new system of teaching Shakespeare has been advocated by eminent authorities in this country and in England, and it has been found successful in practice. It is to further this method and to present, in a tangible form for study, questions on the text, that the following pages have been prepared.

How are we to read a play of Shakespeare? Richard Grant White says : “The way to read Shakespeare is — to read

him. The rest follows as a matter of course. If, not having read before, you read anywhere, you will know a new delight ; you will read more ; you will go on ; in your eager reading you will consume the book. Having read all, you will read again, and now will begin to ponder, and compare, and analyze, and seek to fathom ; and having got thus far, you will have found an occupation which lights with pleasure the whole of your leisure life. This seems to me to be the natural way of reading Shakespeare."

Let the student follow this plan ; let him throw to the winds every commentary, every note, every recollection of any stage-presentation which he may have seen. Then let him follow the advice of Professor Ransome in his admirable "Short Studies in Shakespeare's Plots," — "The work in hand should first be read through as a whole, and the students taught to ask themselves at the end of each scene . . . the following or similar questions : 1st, What has this scene done to advance the story? 2d, What light has been thrown by it upon the characters of the persons concerned? 3d, What light has been thrown upon the circumstances under which the events which form the plot took place? "

The questions here presented, collected from actual class work, as well as from the writings of others, — have been arranged with the purpose of bringing out the development of the plot and emphasizing those points of the great tragedy which are most frequently discussed. It is believed that a class which has accomplished the work in the manner suggested, will not only be able to converse intelligently upon the play, but will have read it with interest and pleasure.

At the close of each act are "Observations," taken from various sources and bearing upon the plot. The object of these is to bring out points which could not be brought out

in the questions and, in some cases, to furnish hints for the answers of certain questions. Some of the most familiar passages in "Hamlet" will be found after the respective acts wherein they occur. Every student should be familiar with, at least, a portion of them.

After the regular series of questions, are additional and general questions upon the play. They are of a more difficult character, and are for those making a rather deeper study of the play than frequently is required. It is intended, however, that the great majority of the questions should be of such a character that they may be answered from a study of the text.

At the suggestion of teachers of experience, a few explanatory notes have been appended to each act. In them, all grammatical and critical references have been carefully avoided. The sole purpose has been to aid the student in understanding what might otherwise have been unintelligible. In cases where the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases has seemed to be implied from the context, no note has been added. In those instances where the questions are answered neither in the text nor in the "Observations," it has been deemed better to leave the teacher to suggest their bearing, by judicious questions of his own, than to burden the work with additional explanatory notes. It is the author's opinion, that, in view of the purpose of the work, — *thoughtful study* on the part of the *student*, — it is better to err upon the side of a paucity rather than of a multiplicity of notes.

CARROLL LEWIS MAXCY.

TROY ACADEMY, November, 1891.



HAMLET,
PRINCE OF DENMARK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.
- HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.
- POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.
- HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
- LAERTES, son to Polonius.
- VOLTIMAND,
- CORNELIUS,
- ROSENCRANTZ,
- GUILDENSTERN, } courtiers.
- OSRIC,
- A Gentleman, }
A Priest.
- MARCELLUS, } officers.
- BERNARDO, }
- FRANCISCO, a soldier.
- REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.
- Players.
- Two Clowns, grave-diggers.
- FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
- A Captain.
- English Ambassadors.
- GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
- OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.
- Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and
other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

SCENE : *Denmark.*

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *at his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

Bernardo. Who's there?

Francisco. Nay, answer me : stand, and unfold yourself.

Bernardo. Long live the king !

Francisco. Bernardo?

Bernardo. He.

Francisco. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Bernardo. 'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco. For this relief much thanks : 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Bernardo. Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco. Not a mouse stirring. 10

Bernardo. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Francisco. I think I hear them.—Stand, ho ! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Horatio. Friends to this ground.

Marcellus. And liegemen to the Dane.

Francisco. Give you good night.

Marcellus.

O, farewell, honest soldier :

Who hath relieved you?

Francisco.

Bernardo has my place.

Give you good night.

[*Exit.*

Marcellus.

Holla ! Bernardo !

Bernardo.

Say,

What, is Horatio there?

Horatio.

A piece of him.

19

Bernardo. Welcome, Horatio : welcome, good Marcellus.

Marcellus. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Bernardo. I have seen nothing.

Marcellus. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night,

That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

satisfy what we see

Horatio. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bernardo.

Sit down awhile ; 30

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we have two nights seen.

Horatio.

Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bernardo. Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one, —

Enter Ghost.

Marcellus. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes
again! 40

Bernardo. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Marcellus. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Bernardo. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Horatio. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

Bernardo. It would be spoke to.

Marcellus. Question it, Horatio.

Horatio. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

Marcellus. It is offended.

Bernardo. See, it stalks away! 50

Horatio. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[*Exit Ghost.*

Marcellus. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Bernardo. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

Horatio. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Marcellus. Is it not like the king?

Horatio. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on 60
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle, *conclusion*
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Marcellus. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Horatio. In what particular thought to work I know not ;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Marcellus. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
knows, 70

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war ;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week ;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day :
Who is't that can inform me ?

Horatio.

That can I ;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet —
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —
Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror :
Against the which a moiety competent 90
Was gaged by our king ; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant,
And carriage of the article design'd,

His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
 Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
 For food and diet, to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach in't ; which is no other — *the courage*
 As it doth well appear unto our state —
 But to recover of us, by strong hand
 And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands
 So by his father lost : and this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations,
 The source of this our watch and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

100

Bernardo. I think it be no other but e'en so :
 Well may it sort that this portentous figure *happen*
 Comes armed through our watch ; so like the king
 That was and is the question of these wars.

110

Horatio. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
 Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse :
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,
 As harbingers preceding still the fates
 And prologue to the omen coming on,
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen. —
 But soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !

120

Re-enter Ghost.

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion !
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
 Speak to me :

If there be any good thing to be done,
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
 Speak to me :

130

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
 O, speak !

[*Cock crows.*

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 Speak of it : stay, and speak ! Stop it, Marcellus.

Marcellus. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

140

Horatio. Do, if it will not stand.

Bernardo.

'Tis here !

Horatio.

'Tis here !

Marcellus. 'Tis gone !

[*Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
 To offer it the show of violence ;
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Bernardo. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Horatio. And then it started like a guilty thing
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
 Awake the god of day ; and, at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 The extravagant and erring spirit hies

150

To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Marcellus. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long ;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad :
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

160

Horatio. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :
Break we our watch up ; and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

170

Marcellus. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle.*

Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAÆRTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,

Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, — 10
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20
Colleagu'd with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting :
Thus much the business is : we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress 30
His further gait herein ; in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject : and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty. 39

Cornelius. }
Voltimand. } In that and all things will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing : heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes. My dread lord, 50
 Your leave and favour to return to France ;
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
 To show my duty in your coronation,
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Polonius. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
 By laboursome petition, and at last
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent : *difficult to obtain*
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go. 60

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will !
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —

Hamlet. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet. Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy veiled lids

70

Seek for thy noble father in the dust :

Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common,

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee ?

Hamlet. Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not ' seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

80

Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly : these indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play :

But I have that within which passeth show ;

These but the trappings and suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,

Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father :

But, you must know, your father lost a father ;

That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound

90

In filial obligation for some term

To do obsequious sorrow ; but to persever

In obstinate condolement is a course

Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief ;

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,

An understanding simple and unschool'd :
 For what we know must be and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we in our peevish opposition
 100 Take it to heart? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd ; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
 From the first corse till he that died to-day,
 'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us
 As of a father : for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne ;
 And with no less nobility of love
 110 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire :
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the chair and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet :
 I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet. I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply ;
 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come ;
 This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
 And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
 Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

Hamlet. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew ! 130
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! O God !
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
 Seem to me all the uses of this world !
 Fie on't ! ah fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,
 That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this !
 But two months dead : nay, not so much, not two :
 So excellent a king ; that was, to this,
 Hyperion to a satyr ; so loving to my mother 140
 That he might not betem the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !
 Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 But what it fed on : and yet, within a month —
 Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is woman ! —
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears : — why she, even she —
 O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason, 150
 Would have mourn'd longer — married with my uncle,
 My father's brother, but no more like my father
 Than I to Hercules : within a month :
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
 She married. O most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
 It is not nor it cannot come to good :
 But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO.

Horatio. Hail to your lordship !

Hamlet.

I am glad to see you well :

Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

161

Horatio. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Hamlet. Sir, my good friend ; I 'll change that name with you :

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?
Marcellus ?

Marcellus. My good lord —

Hamlet. I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

Horatio. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet. I would not hear your enemy say so, 170
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself : I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore ?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Horatio. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Hamlet. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student ;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Horatio. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. 181
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio !
My father ! — methinks I see my father.

Horatio. Where, my lord ?

Hamlet.

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Horatio. I saw him once ; he was a goodly king.

Hamlet. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Horatio. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Hamlet. Saw? who? 190

Horatio. My lord, the king your father.

Hamlet. The king my father!

Horatio. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Hamlet. For God's love, let me hear.

Horatio. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe, 200
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good, 210
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Hamlet. But where was this?

Marcellus. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Hamlet. Did you not speak to it?

Horatio. My lord, I did;

But answer made it none : yet once methought
 It lifted up its head and did address
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak ;
 But even then the morning cock crew loud,
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
 And vanish'd from our sight.

Hamlet. 'Tis very strange. 220

Horatio. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
 And we did think it writ down in our duty
 To let you know of it.

Hamlet. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
 Hold you the watch to night ?

Marcellus. }
Bernardo. } We do, my lord.

Hamlet. Arm'd, say you ?

Marcellus. }
Bernardo. } Arm'd, my lord.

Hamlet. From top to toe ?

Marcellus. }
Bernardo. } My lord, from head to foot.

Hamlet. Then saw you not his face ?

Horatio. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up. 230

Hamlet. What, look'd he frowningly ?

Horatio. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Hamlet. Pale or red ?

Horatio. Nay, very pale.

Hamlet. And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

Horatio. Most constantly.

Hamlet. I would I had been there.

Horatio. It would have much amazed you.

Hamlet. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long ?

Horatio. While one with moderate haste might tell a
 hundred.

Marcellus. }
Bernardo. } Longer, longer.

Horatio. Not when I saw't.

Hamlet. His beard was grizzled, — no?

Horatio. It was, as I have seen it in his life, 241

A sable silver'd.

Hamlet. I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

Horatio. I warrant it will.

Hamlet. If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape

And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,

Let it be tenable in your silence still;

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue: 250

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,

I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Hamlet. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;

I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!

Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,

Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*

✓ SCENE III. *A room in Polonius' house.*

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laertes. My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:

And, sister, as the winds give benefit

And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Ophelia. Do you doubt that?

Laertes. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;
No more.

Ophelia. No more but so?

Laertes. Think it no more :

10

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will : but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
For he himself is subject to his birth :
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state ;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed ; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open

*muscular
action*

20

30

To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes :

The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.

40

Be wary then ; best safety lies in fear :
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Ophelia. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

50

Laertes.

O, fear me not.

I stay too long : but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace ;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Polonius. Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for shame !
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There ; my blessing with thee !
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. 60
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. 80
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee !

Laertes. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Polonius. The time invites you ; go ; your servants tend.

Laertes. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Ophelia. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laertes. Farewell. [Exit.

Polonius. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

Ophelia. So please you, something touching the Lord
Hamlet.

Polonius. Marry, well bethought : 90
 'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
 Given private time to you ; and you yourself
 Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :
 If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
 And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
 You do not understand yourself so clearly
 As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
 What is between you? give me up the truth.

Ophelia. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
 Of his affection to me. 100

Polonius. Affection ! pooh ! you speak like a green girl,
 Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
 Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Ophelia. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polonius. Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby ;
 That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
 Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly ;
 Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
 Running it thus — you'll tender me a fool.

Ophelia. My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110
 In honourable fashion.

Polonius. Ay, fashion you may call it ; go to, go to.

Ophelia. And hath given countenance to his speech, my
 lord,
 With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Polonius. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
 Lends the tongue vows : these blazes, daughter,
 Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
 Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
 You must not take for fire. From this time

Be somewhat scanted of your maiden presence ;
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,
 And with a larger tether may he walk
 Than may be given you : in few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows ; for they are brokers,
 Not of that dye which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
 The better to beguile. This is for all :
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
 Look to't, I charge you : come your ways.

130

Ophelia. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The platform.*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Hamlet. The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.

Horatio. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Hamlet. What hour now ?

Horatio. I think it lacks of twelve.

Marcellus. No, it is struck.

Horatio. Indeed ? I heard it not : it then draws near the
 season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*

What does this mean, my lord ?

Hamlet. The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels ;
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

Horatio. Is it a custom ?

Hamlet. Ay, marry is't :

But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel east and west
 Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations :
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition ; and indeed it takes 20
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth — wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin —
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners, that these men, 30
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star, —
 Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo —
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault : the dram of eale
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
 To his own scandal.

Horatio. Look, my lord, it comes !

Enter Ghost.

Hamlet. Angels and ministers of grace defend us !
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape
 That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me !
 Let me not burst in ignorance ; but tell
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements ; why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature
 So horridly to shake our disposition
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

Horatio. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Marcellus. Look, with what courteous action 60
 It waves you to a more removed ground :
 But do not go with it.

Horatio. No, by no means.

Hamlet. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

Horatio. Do not, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself?
 It waves me forth again : I'll follow it.

Horatio. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70
 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
 And draw you into madness? think of it :
 The very place puts toys of desperation,
 Without more motive, into every brain
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea
 And hears it roar beneath.

Hamlet. It waves me still.

Go on ; I'll follow thee. 79

Marcellus. You shall not go, my lord.

Hamlet. Hold off your hands.

Horatio. Be ruled ; you shall not go.

Hamlet. My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body
 As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
 Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me !
 I say, away ! Go on ; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*]

Horatio. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Marcellus. Let's follow ; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Horatio. Have after. To what issue will this come? 89

Marcellus. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Horatio. Heaven will direct it.

Marcellus. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform.**Enter Ghost and HAMLET.*

Hamlet. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Hamlet. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Hamlet. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Hamlet. Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night, 10
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine : 20
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

Hamlet. O God !

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet. Murder !

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;

But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Hamlet. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love, 30
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt ;

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,

A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark

Is by a forged process of my death

Rankly abused : but know, thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father's life

Now wears his crown.

Hamlet. O my prophetic soul ! 40

My uncle !

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, —

O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power

So to seduce ! — won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :

O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !

From me, whose love was of that dignity

That it went hand in hand even with the vow

I made to her in marriage, and to decline 50

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor

To those of mine !

But virtue, as it never will be moved,

Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.

But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon, 60
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ; 70
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd :
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head :
O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible ! 80
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive

Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire :
 Adieu, adieu ! Hamlet, remember me.

90

[*Exit.*

Hamlet. O all you host of heaven ! O earth ! what
 else ?

And shall I couple hell ! O, fie ! Hold, hold, my heart ;
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee !
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there ;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matters : yes, by heaven !
 O most pernicious woman !

100

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !
 My tables, — meet it is I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark :
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word ;
 It is 'Adieu, adieu ! remember me.'

[*Writing.*

110

I have sworn't.

Marcellus. }
Horatio. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord !

Marcellus.

[*Within*] Lord Hamlet,

Horatio.

[*Within*] Heaven secure him !

Hamlet. So be it !

Horatio. [*Within*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord !

Hamlet. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Marcellus. How is't, my noble lord ?

Horatio. What news, my lord ?

Hamlet. O, wonderful !

Horatio. Good my lord, tell it.

Hamlet. No ; you'll reveal it.

Horatio. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Marcellus. Nor I, my lord. 120

Hamlet. How say you, then ; would heart of man once
think it ?

But you'll be secret ?

Horatio. }
Marcellus. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Hamlet. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.

Horatio. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the
grave

To tell us this.

Hamlet. Why, right ; you are i' the right ;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part :
You, as your business and desire shall point you ;
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is ; and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Horatio. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Hamlet. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily ;
Yes, 'faith, heartily.

Horatio. There's no offence, my lord.

Hamlet. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you :
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends, 140
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Horatio. What is't, my lord? we will.

Hamlet. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Horatio. }
Marcellus. } My lord, we will not.

Hamlet. Nay, but swear't.

Horatio. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Marcellus. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Hamlet. Upon my sword.

Marcellus. We have sworn, my lord, already. 140

Hamlet. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
true-penny? 150

Come on — you hear this fellow in the cellarage —
Consent to swear.

Horatio. Propose the oath, my lord.

Hamlet. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword :
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword. 160

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. Well said, old mole ! canst work i' the earth so fast ?
A worthy pioner ! Once more remove, good friends.

Horatio. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange !

Hamlet. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come ;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

170

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As ' Well, well, we know,' or ' We could, an if we would,'

Or ' If we list to speak,' or ' There be, an if they might,'

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me : this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,

180

Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit ! [*They swear.*] So,
gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you :

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right !

Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*

*Key to Hamlet's
Character - 190
with*

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

SCENE 1.

- l. 12. "If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The **rivals** of my watch," — the old, and now obsolete, meaning of "rivals," was *companions*, or *alternates*. For derivation consult dictionary.
- l. 16. "Give you good night," is equivalent to "Good night."
- l. 29. "He may **approve** our eyes," — may *confirm* or *ratify* what we see.
- l. 62. "So frowned he once, when in an angry **parle**," — "parle," an obsolete word, meaning *conversation*, *parley*.
- l. 100. "Some enterprize
That hath a **stomach** in't," — that requires *courage*.
- l. 109. "Well may it **sort**," — well may it *happen* or *come to pass*.
- l. 140. "Shall I strike at it with my **partisan**?" — with my *pike*.
- l. 163. "No fairy **takes**," — no fairy *bewitches*.

SCENE 2.

- l. 60. "Upon his will I seal'd my **hard** consent," — my consent *hard* or *difficult* to obtain.
- l. 65. "A little more than **kin**, and less than **kind**," — "Because, in being at once his uncle and his father, he is twice *kin*. And he is 'less than *kind*,' because his incestuous marriage, as Hamlet views it, is *unnatural*." [HUDSON.]
- l. 141. "That he might not **beteeem** the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly," — might not *permit* or *allow* the winds to *touch* her face too roughly.
- l. 192. "Season your **admiration**," — the old word for *wonder*, *astonishment*, hence "temper or restrain your *astonishment*."

SCENE 3.

- l. 12. "In **thews** and bulk," — in *muscular action*, in *sinews*.
- l. 15. "And now no **cautel**," — no *craft*, *deceit*.
- l. 51. "And **recks** not his own **rede**," — *heeds* not his own *advice*.

- l. 58. "And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou **character**," — *engrave* these precepts on thy mind.
- l. 69. "Take each man's **censure**," — each man's *opinion* — obsolete meaning.
- l. 122. "Set your **entreatments**," — *interviews* with yourself.

SCENE 4.

- l. 9. "Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels," — keeps up the *festivities* and the *boisterous dances*.
- l. 27. "By the o'ergrowth of some **complexion**," — by the excess of some *natural habit*.
- l. 36. "The dram of **eale**," — *eale* obsolete form of *ale*.
- l. 75. "The very place puts **toys** of desperation," — desperate *whims* or *fancies*.
- l. 85. . . . "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me," — that *hinders*, *prevents*, me.

SCENE 5.

- l. 69. . . . "Like **eager** droppings into milk," — drops of *acid*.
- l. 71. "And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most **lazar-like**," — a most *instantaneous disease formed scabs*, *leper-like*, about my body.
- l. 77. "**Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled**," — *without* having received the *Eucharist*, *unprepared* for death, and *without extreme unction*.
- l. 97. . . . "While memory holds a seat
In this distracted **globe**," — this distracted *head* of mine.
- l. 138. "It is an **honest** ghost," — it is a ghost *in truth*, *actually*.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house.**Enter* POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.*Polonius.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.*Reynaldo.* I will, my lord.*Polonius.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.*Reynaldo.* My lord, I did intend it.*Polonius.* Marry, well said ; very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris :
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense ; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question 10
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it :
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
As thus, ' I know his father and his friends,
And in part him : ' do you mark this, Reynaldo ?*Reynaldo.* Ay, very well, my lord.*Polonius.* ' And in part him ; but ' you may say ' not well :
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
Addicted so and so : ' and there put on him
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank 20
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips

As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Reynaldo. As gaming, my lord.

Polonius. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing : you may go so far.

Reynaldo. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Polonius. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency ; 30
That's not my meaning : but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Reynaldo. But, my good lord, —

Polonius. Wherefore should you do this?

Reynaldo. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

Polonius. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;

And, I believe, it is a fetch of wit :
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, 40
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence ;
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Reynaldo. Very good, my lord.

Polonius. And then, sir, does he this — he does — what

was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something: where did I leave? 51

Reynaldo. At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and 'gentlemen.'

Polonius. At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry; He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman; I saw him yesterday, or t'other day, Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say There was 'a gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse; There falling out at tennis: 'or perchance, 'I saw him enter such a house of sale,' 60
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out;
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Reynaldo. My lord, I have.

Polonius. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Reynaldo. Good my lord! 70

Polonius. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Reynaldo. I shall, my lord.

Polonius. And let him ply his music.

Reynaldo. Well, my lord.

Polonius. Farewell! [Exit Reynaldo.]

Enter OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Ophelia. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Polonius. With what, i' the name of God?

Ophelia. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced ;
No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle ; 80
Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.

Polonius. Mad for thy love ?

Ophelia. My lord, I do not know ;
But truly, I do fear it.

Polonius. What said he ?

Ophelia. He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face 90
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me. 100

Polonius. Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Ophelia. No, my good lord, but, as you did command, I did repel his letters, and denied His access to me.

Polonius. That hath made him mad. 110
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle, And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy! By heaven, it is as proper to our age, To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions As it is common for the younger sort To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king: This must be known; which, being kept close, might move More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! Moreover that we much did long to see you, The need we have to use you did provoke Our hasty sending. Something have you heard Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it, Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man Resembles that it was. What it should be, More than his father's death, that thus hath put him So much from the understanding of himself, I cannot dream of: I entreat you both, 10
That, being of so young days brought up with him, And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time : so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you ;
 And sure I am two men there are not living 20
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Rosencrantz. Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
 Put your dread pleasures more into command
 Than to entreaty.

Guildestern. But we both obey,
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30
 To lay our service freely at your feet,
 To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildestern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildestern and gentle Rosencrantz :
 And I beseech you instantly to visit
 My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guildestern. Heavens make our presence and our prac-
 tices
 Pleasant and helpful to him !

Queen. Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildestern, and some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Polonius. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd. 41

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Polonius. Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king :
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear. 50

Polonius. Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit Polonius.*

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main ;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends !

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Voltimand. Most fair return of greetings and desires. 60
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness : whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
 On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys ;
 Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
 Makes vow before his uncle never more 70
 To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack :
 With an entreaty, herein further shown, [Giving a paper.
 That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprise,
 On such regards of safety and allowance
 As herein are set down.

King. It likes us well ; 80
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour :
 Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :
 Most welcome home ! [Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.

X *Polonius.* This business is well ended.
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 What day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, 90
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
 I will be brief : your noble son is mad :
 Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,
 What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?
 But let that go.

Queen. • More matter, with less art.

Polonius. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity ;
 And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him, then : and now remains
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause :
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.

I have a daughter — have while she is mine —
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise.

[Reads] *'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,—*

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; 'beautified' is a vile phrase : but you shall hear. Thus :

[Reads] *'In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.'*

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Polonius. Good madam, stay awhile ; I will be faithful.

[Reads] *'Doubt thou the stars are fire ;*

Doubt that the sun doth move ;

Doubt truth to be a liar ;

But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers ; I have not art to reckon my groans : but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,
 And more above, hath his solicitings,
 As they fell out by time, by means and place,
 All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love?

Polonius. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable. 130

Polonius. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing —
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me — what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak: 140
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be:' and then I prescripts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed — a short tale to make —
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves, 150
And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Polonius. Hath there been such a time — I'd fain know
that —

That I have positively said ' 'Tis so,'
When it proved otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Polonius. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*] Take this
from this, if this be otherwise :

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Polonius. You know, sometimes he walks four hours to-
gether 160

Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Polonius. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

Polonius. Away, I do beseech you, both away :
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

Enter HAMLET, reading.

O, give me leave : 170

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Hamlet. Well, God-a-mercy.

Polonius. Do you know me, my lord?

Hamlet. Excellent well ; you are a fishmonger.

Polonius. Not I, my lord !

Hamlet. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Polonius. Honest, my lord !

Hamlet. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Polonius. That's very true, my lord. 180

Hamlet. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

Polonius. I have, my lord.

Hamlet. Let her not walk i' the sun : conception is a blessing : but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.

Polonius. [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter : yet he knew me not at first ; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord? 191

Hamlet. Words, words, words.

Polonius. What is the matter, my lord?

Hamlet. Between who?

Polonius. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Hamlet. Slanders, sir : for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

Polonius. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Hamlet. Into my grave?

Polonius. Indeed, that is out o' the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are ! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so pros-

perously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. — My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

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Hamlet. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal : except my life, except my life, except my life.

Polonius. Fare you well, my lord.

Hamlet. These tedious old fools !

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Polonius. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet ; there he is.

Rosencrantz. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir !

[*Exit Polonius.*]

Guildenstern. My honoured lord !

Rosencrantz. My most dear lord !

Hamlet. My excellent good friends ! How dost thou, Guildenstern ? Ah, Rosencrantz ? Good lads, how do ye both ?

Rosencrantz. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guildenstern. Happy, in that we are not over-happy ;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Hamlet. Nor the soles of her shoe ?

Rosencrantz. Neither, my lord.

230

Hamlet. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours ?

Guildenstern. 'Faith, her privates we.

Hamlet. In the secret parts of fortune ? O, most true ; she is a strumpet. What's the news ?

Rosencrantz. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Hamlet. Then is doomsday near : but your news is not

true. Let me question more in particular : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither ?

Guildestern. Prison, my lord !

Hamlet. Denmark's a prison.

Rosencrantz. Then is the world one.

Hamlet. A goodly one ; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Rosencrantz. We think not so, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, then, 'tis none to you ; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so : to me it is a prison. 250

Rosencrantz. Why then, your ambition makes it one ; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Hamlet. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guildestern. Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Hamlet. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Rosencrantz. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Hamlet. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court ? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Rosencrantz. } We'll wait upon you.
Guildestern. }

Hamlet. No such matter : I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore ? 269

Rosencrantz. To visit you, my lord ; no other occasion.

Hamlet. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks ; but I thank you : and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for ? Is it your own inclining ? Is it a free visitation ? Come, deal justly with me : come, come ; nay, speak.

Guildestern. What should we say, my lord ?

Hamlet. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for ; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour : I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Rosencrantz. To what end, my lord ?

Hamlet. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no ?

Rosencrantz. [*Aside to Guildestern*] What say you ?

Hamlet. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you. — If you love me, hold not off. 290

Guildestern. My lord, we were sent for.

Hamlet. I will tell you why ; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises ; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work

is a man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust ? man delights not me : no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Rosencrantz. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts. 310

Hamlet. Why did you laugh then, when I said ‘man delights not me’ ?

Rosencrantz. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you : we coted them on the way ; and hither are they coming to offer you service.

Hamlet. He that plays the king shall be welcome ; his majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis ; the humorous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o’ the sere ; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for’t. What players are they ?

Rosencrantz. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Hamlet. How chances it they travel ? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Rosencrantz. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Hamlet. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city ? are they so followed ? 331

Rosencrantz. No, indeed, are they not.

Hamlet. How comes it ? do they grow rusty ?

Rosencrantz. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace : but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for 't : these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

Hamlet. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players — as it is most like, if their means are no better — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Rosencrantz. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides ; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy : there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

352

Hamlet. Is't possible?

Guildenstern. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Hamlet. Do the boys carry it away?

Rosencrantz. Ay, that they do, my lord ; Hercules and his load too.

Hamlet. It is not very strange ; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

Guildenstern. There are the players.

Hamlet. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then : the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony : let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome : but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

371

Guildestern. In what, my dear lord?

Hamlet. I am but mad north-north-west : when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS.

Polonius. Well be with you, gentlemen !

Hamlet. Hark you, Guildestern ; and you too : at each ear a hearer : that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Rosencrantz. Happily he's the second time come to them ; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Hamlet. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it. You say right, sir : o' Monday morning ; 'twas so indeed.

Polonius. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Hamlet. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

Polonius. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Hamlet. Buz, buz !

388

Polonius. Upon mine honour, —

Hamlet. Then came each actor on his ass, —

Polonius. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited : Seneca cannot be

too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Hamlet. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou !

Polonius. What treasure had he, my lord ?

Hamlet. Why,

‘ One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.’

Polonius. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Hamlet. Am I not i’ the right, old Jephthah ?

Polonius. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Hamlet. Nay, that follows not.

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Polonius. What follows, then, my lord ?

Hamlet. Why,

‘ As by lot, God wot,’

and then, you know,

‘ It came to pass, as most like it was,’ —

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more ; for look, where my abridgement comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend ! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last : comest thou to beard me in Denmark ? What, my young lady and mistress ! By’r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We’ll e’en to’t like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : we’ll have a

speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech. 425

First Player. What speech, my lord?

Hamlet. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was — as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried on the top of mine — an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see —

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,' —

it is not so: — it begins with Pyrrhus: —

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse, 445
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules; horribly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

So, proceed you.

Polonius. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

First Player.

'Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.

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But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
 In general synod, take away her power;
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
 As low as to the fiends!'

485

Polonius. This is too long.

Hamlet. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

First Player. 'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen —'

Hamlet. 'The mobled queen?'

Polonius. That's good ; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Player. 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout about that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.'

505

Polonius. Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

Hamlet. 'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used ; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time : after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Polonius. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet. God's bodykins, man, much better : use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity : the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Polonius. Come, sirs.

525

Hamlet. Follow him, friends : we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*]

Dost thou hear me, old friend ; can you play the Murder of Gonzago ?

First Player. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not ?

First Player. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Very well. Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

Rosencrantz. Good my lord !

Hamlet. Ay, so, God be wi' ye ; [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage wann'd,

545

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit ? and all for nothing !

For Hecuba !

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her ? What would he do,

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have ? He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face? 565
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha !

'Swounds, I should take it : for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal : bloody, bawdy villain !
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain !
O, vengeance !

Why, what an ass am I ! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion !

Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brain ! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene 585
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;
I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,

I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil : and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
More relative than this : the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[*Exit.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

SCENE I.

- l. 31. . . . "But breathe his faults so **quaintly**," — so *shrewdly*, so *ingeniously*.
- l. 103. "Whose violent property **fordoes** itself," — *undoes*, *destroys* itself.

SCENE 2.

- l. 139. . . . "No, I went **round** to work," I went *roundly*, *earnestly* to work.
- l. 315. "We **coted** them on the way," — we *overtook* them.
- l. 320. "The clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are **tickle o' the sere**," — those who are *ready to laugh on small provocation*.
- l. 335. "But there is, sir, an **aery** of children," etc. — but there is, sir, a *brood* of children, young nestlings, who cry out at the tops of their voices, etc.
- l. 342. "How are they **escoted**?" — *paid*, *maintained*.
- l. 349. "No sin to **tarre** them to controversy," — to *excite* them.
- l. 367. "Let me **comply** with you," — *compliment*, *show civility* to you.
- l. 374. "I know a hawk from a **handsaw**," — a hawk from a *heron*.
- l. 417. "Thy face is **valanced**," — *fringed* with a beard.
- l. 420. "By the **altitude** of a **chopine**," — *height* of a shoe.
- l. 429. "It was **caviare** to the **general**," — not *generally appreciated*.
(*caviare*, a highly-seasoned delicacy).
- l. 449. "Now is he total **gules**," — *red*, *bloody*.
- l. 476. . . . "The **rack** stand still," — *light clouds*.
- l. 494. "The **mobled** queen," — *muffled*, *hastily dressed*.
- l. 498. "With **bisson rheum**," — with *blinding tears*.
- l. 563. "A damn'd **defeat** was made," — *ruin*, *destruction*.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,
and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Rosencrantz. He does confess he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guildenstern. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well? 10

Rosencrantz. Most like a gentleman.

Guildenstern. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Rosencrantz. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Rosencrantz. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order

This night to play before him.

Polonius.

'Tis most true :

And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Rosencrantz. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

King.

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

30

Affront Ophelia :

Her father and myself, lawful espials,

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge,

And gather by him, as he is behaved,

If't be the affliction of his love or no

That thus he suffers for.

Queen.

I shall obey you

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues

40

Will bring him to his wonted way again,

To both your honours.

Ophelia.

Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*

Polonius. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,

We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this book ;

That show of such an exercise may colour

Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—

'Tis too much proved — that with devotion's visage

And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true!

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! 50
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burthen!

Polonius. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet. To be, or not to be: that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end 60
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 70
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make

write no more

With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
'Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. — Soft you now !
The fair Ophelia ! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

80

Ophelia.

Good my lord,

90

How does your honour for this many a day?

Hamlet. I humbly thank you ; well, well, well.*Ophelia.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver ;
I pray you, now receive them.*Hamlet.*

No, not I ;

I never gave you aught.

Ophelia. My honour'd lord, I know right well you did ;
And with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,
Take these again ; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
Theré, my lord.

100

Hamlet. Ha, ha ! are you honest?*Ophelia.* My lord?*Hamlet.* Are you fair?*Ophelia.* What means your lordship?

Hamlet. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty? 110

Hamlet. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Ophelia. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Ophelia. I was the more deceived. 120

Hamlet. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time so act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father? 130

Ophelia. At home, my lord.

Hamlet. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Hamlet. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for

wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell. 140

Ophelia. O heavenly powers, restore him !

Hamlet. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit.

Ophelia. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown ! 150
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh ;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstacy ; O, woe is me, 160
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.

King. Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger : which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination

Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute : 170
 Haply the seas and countries different
 With variable objects shall expel .

This something-settled matter in his heart,
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
 From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Polonius. It shall do well : but yet do I believe
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia !
 You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;
 We heard it all. My lord, do as you please ; 180
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,
 To England send him, or confine him where .
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so :
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.*

Enter HAMLET and Players.

Hamlet. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
 it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as
 many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke
 my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand,
 thus, but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and,
 as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire

and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it. 13

First Player. I warrant your honour.

Hamlet. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and belloyed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 32

First Player. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Hamlet. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the

mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. 41

[*Exeunt Players.*]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

Polonius. And the queen too, and that presently.

Hamlet. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*]

Will you two help to hasten them?

Rosencrantz. } We will, my lord.

Guildenstern. }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Hamlet. What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Horatio. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Hamlet. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal. 50

Horatio. O, my dear lord, —

Hamlet. Nay, do not think I flatter;

For what advancement may I hope from thee

That no-revenue hast but thy good spirits,

To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?

No, let the candid tongue lick absurd pomp,

And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee

Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice

And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been 60

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,

A man that fortune's buffets and rewards

Hath ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those
 Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
 That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core; ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
 There is a play to-night before the king ;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance
 Which I have told thee of my father's death :
 I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe mine uncle : if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note ;
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
 And after we will both our judgements join
 In censure of his seeming.

70

80

Horatio.

Well, my lord :

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Hamlet. They are coming to the play ; I must be idle :
 Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,
 OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Hamlet. Excellent, i' faith ; of the chameleon's dish : I
 eat the air, promise-crammed : you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine. 91

Hamlet. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

Polonius. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

Hamlet. What did you enact?

Polonius. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Hamlet. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready? 100

Rosencrantz. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Hamlet. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Polonius. [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

Hamlet. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*]

Ophelia. No, my lord.

Hamlet. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Ophelia. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Do you think I meant country matters?

Ophelia. I think nothing, my lord. 110

Hamlet. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Ophelia. What is, my lord?

Hamlet. Nothing.

Ophelia. You are merry, my lord.

Hamlet. Who, I?

Ophelia. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Ophelia. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Hamlet. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot!'

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Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Ophelia. What means this, my lord?

Hamlet. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

Ophelia. Belike this show imports the argument of the play?

Enter Prologue.

Hamlet. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Ophelia. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Hamlet. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means. 150

Ophelia. You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

Prologue. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. [*Exit.*

Hamlet. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Ophelia. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Hamlet. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King and Queen.

Player King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

Player Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must: 170
For women's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

Player King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,

Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou —

Player Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Hamlet. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood!

Player Queen. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

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Player King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity:
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run

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That our devices still are overthrown;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Player Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
 To desperation turn my trust and hope!
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Hamlet. If she should break it now!

Player King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;
 My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
 The tedious day with sleep. 231

[*Sleeps.*

Player Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
 And never come mischance between us twain!

[*Exit.*

Hamlet. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady protests too much, methinks.

Hamlet. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Hamlet. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Hamlet. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Ophelia. You are as good as a chorus, my lord. 249

Hamlet. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Ophelia. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Hamlet. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Ophelia. Still better, and worse.

Hamlet. So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

Lucianus. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*]

Hamlet. He poisons him i' the garden for 's estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Ophelia. The king rises.

Hamlet. What, frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord? 270

Polonius. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light: away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*]

Hamlet. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep :
So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me — with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Horatio. Half a share.

Hamlet. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here
A very, very — pajock.

Horatio. You might have rhymed.

Hamlet. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive? 290

Horatio. Very well, my lord.

Hamlet. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Horatio. I did very well note him.

Hamlet. Ah, ha ! Come, some music ! come, the recorders !

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music !

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Guildenstern. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Hamlet. Sir, a whole history.

Guildenstern. The king, sir, —

Hamlet. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guildenstern. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

Hamlet. With drink, sir?

Guildestern. No, my lord, rather with choler.

Hamlet. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guildestern. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair. 310

Hamlet. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

Guildestern. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Hamlet. You are welcome.

Guildestern. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Hamlet. Sir, I cannot.

Guildestern. What, my lord?

Hamlet. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

Rosecrantz. Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Hamlet. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart. 330

Rosencrantz. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Hamlet. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Rosencrantz. My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Rosencrantz. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Hamlet. Sir, I lack advancement.

Rosencrantz. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Hamlet. Ay, sir, but, 'while the grass grows,'— the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter Players with recorders.

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:— why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guildenstern. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly. 349

Hamlet. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guildenstern. My lord, I cannot.

Hamlet. I pray you.

Guildenstern. Believe me, I cannot.

Hamlet. I do beseech you.

Guildenstern. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Hamlet. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guildenstern. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Hamlet. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my

mystery ; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass : and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

371

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir !

Polonius. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Hamlet. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel ?

Polonius. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Hamlet. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius. It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet. Or like a whale ?

380

Polonius. Very like a whale.

Hamlet. Then will I come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

Polonius. I will say so.

Hamlet. By and by is easily said. [*Exit Polonius.*

Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,

When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out

Contagion to this world : now could I drink hot blood,

And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :

Let me be cruel, not unnatural :

I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ;
 How in my words soever she be shent,
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent !

397

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
 To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ;
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
 And he to England shall along with you :
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunacies.

Guildenstern. We will ourselves provide :
 Most holy and religious fear it is
 To keep those many many bodies safe
 That live and feed upon your majesty.

10

Rosencrantz. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,
 To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
 That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone

20

Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Rosencrantz. }
Guildenstern. }

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Polonius. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him home :
And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege :
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit Polonius.*]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will :
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ; 40
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?

And what's in prayer but this two fold force,
 To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
 Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up; 50
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
 In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above; 60
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel, 70
 Be soft as sinews of a new-born babe!
 All may be well. [Retires and kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
 And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
 A villain kills my father; and for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send

To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread ;

80

With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;

And how his audit stands who knows save heaven ?

But in our circumstance and course of thought,

'Tis heavy with him : and am I then revenged,

To take him in the purging of his soul,

When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?

No !

Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,

Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed ;

90

At gaming, swearing, or about some act

That has no relish of salvation in't ;

Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,

And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays :

This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[*Exit.*

King. [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The Queen's closet.*

Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.

Polonius. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him :

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between

Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.

Pray you, be round with him.

Hamlet. [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen.

I'll warrant you,

Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*Polonius hides behind the arras.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Hamlet. Mother, you have my father much offended. 10

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Hamlet. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet!

Hamlet.

What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Hamlet.

No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

And — would it were not so! — you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

Hamlet. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not
budge;

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you. 20

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

Polonius. [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

Hamlet. [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead; for a ducat,
dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras.*]

Polonius. [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet.

Nay, I know not :

Is it the king?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this !*Hamlet.* A bloody deed ! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.*Queen.* As kill a king !*Hamlet.*

Ay, lady, 'twas my word. 30

[Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell !

I took thee for thy better : take thy fortune ;

Thou find'st to be too busy in some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands : peace ! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart ; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damned custom have not brass'd it so

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'est wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me ?*Hamlet.*

Such an act 40

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love

And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows

As false as dicers' oaths : O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words : heaven's face doth glow ;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act. 50

Queen.

Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index ?

Hamlet. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow ;
Hyperion's curls ; the front of Jove himself ;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command ;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill ;
A combination and a form indeed, 60
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man :
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows :
Here is your husband ; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha ! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love ; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgement : and what judgement 70
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion ; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd ; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense 80
Could not so mope.
O shame ! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,

And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn
 And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more :
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
 And there I see such black and grained spots
 As will not leave their tinct. 90

Hamlet. Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
 Over the nasty sty, —

Queen. O, speak to me no more ;
 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;
 No more, sweet Hamlet !

Hamlet. A murderer and a villain ;
 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithes
 Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ;
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
 And put it in his pocket ! 100

Queen. No more !

Hamlet. A king of shreds and patches, —

Enter Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
 You heavenly guards ! What would your gracious figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad !

Hamlet. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
 That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
 The important acting of your dread command ?
 O, say !

Ghost. Do not forget : This visitation
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. 110
 But, look, amazement on thy mother sits :
 O, step between her and her fighting soul :
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works :
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

Hamlet. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy
 And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
 And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm, 120
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
 Start up, and stand an end. O gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Hamlet. On him, on him ! Look you, how pale he glares !
 His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable. Do not look upon me ;
 Lest with this piteous action you convert
 My stern effects : then what I have to do
 Will want true colour ; tears perchance for blood. 130

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Hamlet. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

Hamlet. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Hamlet. Why, look you there ! look, how it steals away !
 My father, in his habit as he lived !

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !

[*Exit Ghost.*]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain :

This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Hamlet. Ecstasy !

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time, 140
And makes as healthful music : it is not madness
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word ; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks :
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ; 150
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue ;
For in the fatness of these pury times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Hamlet. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night : but go not to mine uncle's bed ;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not. 160
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence : the next more easy ;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

And either master the devil, or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night : 170
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[*Pointing to Polonius.*]

I do repent : but heaven hath pleased it so,
 To punish me with this and this with me,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
 I must be cruel, only to be kind :
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
 One word more, good lady. 180

Queen. What shall I do?

Hamlet. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed ;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek ; call you his mouse ;
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know ;
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise, 190
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
 Such dear concernings hide ? who would do so ?
 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe

What thou hast said to me.

200

Hamlet. I must to England ; you know that ?

Queen.

Alack,

I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on.

Hamlet. There's letters seal'd : and my two school-fellows,

Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,

They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,

And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer

Hoist with his own petar : and 't shall go hard

But I will delve one yard below their mines,

And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,

210

When in one line two crafts directly meet.

This man shall set me packing :

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.

Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor

Is now most still, most secret and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.

Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally ; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

SCENE 1.

- l. 29. "For we have **closely** sent for Hamlet hither," — *secretly sent*.
 l. 31. "**Affront** Ophelia," — *meet, encounter*.
 l. 76. . . . "Who would **fardels** bear," — *burdens bear*.

SCENE 2.

- l. 22. "His form and **pressure**," — *character, impression*.
 l. 79. "Vulcan's **stithy**," — *smithy*.
 l. 141. "This is a **muching mallecho**," — *secret mischief*.
 l. 156. . . . "The **posy** of a ring," — *motto, inscription*.
 l. 169. "That I **distrust** you," — am *anxious* about you.
 l. 178. "My **operant** powers," — my *active* powers.
 l. 187. "The **instances** that second marriage move," — *inducements, motives*.
 l. 224. "An **anchor's** cheer," — an *anchorite's, hermit's* cheer.
 l. 225. "That **blanks** the face of joy," — that *blanches, pales* the face of joy.
 l. 242. "Tropically," — by a *trope, metaphorically, figuratively*.
 l. 280. "With two **Provincial** roses on my **razed** shoes," — with two roses of *Provins, or Provence*, on my *slashed, embroidered* shoes.
 l. 287. "A very, very, — **pajock**," — *peacock*.
 l. 294. "Come the **recorders**," — *flutes*.
 l. 327. "Amazement and **admiration**," — I. 2, l. 192.
 l. 336. "By these **pickers and stealers**," — these *hands*.
 l. 357. "Govern these **ventages**," — *vents, holes*.
 l. 397. . . . "She be **shent**," — *blamed, reprovèd*.

SCENE 3.

- l. 32. "Should o'erhear
 The speech, of **vantage**," — from some *secret point of observation*.
 l. 68. "O **limed** soul," — *ensnared, caught as in bird-lime*.
 l. 88. . . . "And know thou a more horrid **hent**," — *purpose*.

SCENE 4.

- l. 46. "As from the body of **contraction**," — from the *marriage-contract*.
- l. 52. . . . "Thunders in the **index**," — at the *outset*.
- l. 67. "And **batten** on this moor," — *grow fat*.
- l. 98. . . . "A **vice** of kings," — a *clown* or *buffoon* of a king.
- l. 114. "**Conceit** in weakest bodies," — *imagination*.
- l. 121. . . . "Like life in **excrements**," — in *excrescences*, *lifeless growths*.
- l. 127. "Would make them **capable**," — *susceptible, intelligent*.
- l. 129. "My stern **effects**," — *actions, purposes*.
- l. 139. "**Ecstasy**," — *madness*.
- l. 185. . . . "A pair of **reechy** kisses," — *reeking, filthy* kisses.
- l. 191. "Would from a **paddock**, from a bat, a **gib**," would hide from a *toad*, a bat, or a *cat*.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs, these profound
heaves :

You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night !

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier : in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat !'
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

10

King. O heavy deed !

It had been so with us, had we been there :

His liberty is full of threats to all ;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,

This mad young man : but so much was our love,

We would not understand what was most fit ;

20

But, like the owner of a foul disease,

To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd :
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure ; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away !
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence : and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern !

30

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid :
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :
Go seek him out ; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done ; so, haply, slander
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. O, come away !
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

40

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet. Safely stowed.

Rosencrantz. } *[Within]* Hamlet ! Lord Hamlet !
Guildenstern. }

Hamlet. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Rosencrantz. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Hamlet. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Rosencrantz. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

And bear it to the chapel.

Hamlet. Do not believe it.

Rosencrantz. Believe what? 10

Hamlet. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Rosencrantz. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Hamlet. Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again. 20

Rosencrantz. I understand you not, my lord.

Hamlet. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Rosencrantz. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Hamlet. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

Guildenstern. A thing, my lord!

Hamlet. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.**Enter KING, attended.*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
 How dangerous is it that this man goes loose !
 Yet must not we put the strong law on him :
 He's loved of the distracted multitude,
 Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes :
 And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
 But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
 This sudden sending him away must seem
 Deliberate pause : diseases desperate grown
 By desperate appliance are relieved,
 Or not at all.

10

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

How now ! what hath befall'n ?

Rosencrantz. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
 We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he ?

Rosencrantz. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your
 pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.*Rosencrantz.* Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.**King.* Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?*Hamlet.* At supper.*King.* At supper ! where ?

20

Hamlet. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a
 certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your

worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots : your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.

King. Alas, alas !

Hamlet. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this? 30

Hamlet. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Hamlet. In heaven ; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [To some Attendants,

Hamlet. He will stay till you come. [Exeunt Attendants.

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, — 40
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, — must send thee hence
With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself ;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Hamlet. For England !

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Hamlet. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Hamlet. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come ; for England ! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet. 50

Hamlet. My mother : father and mother is man and wife :

man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. Come, for England ! [Exit.

King. Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed abroad ; Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night : Away ! for every thing is seal'd and done That else leans on the affair : pray you, make haste.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught —

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

60

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us — thou may'st not coldly set

Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

[Exit.

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching.

Fortinbras. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras

Claims the conveyance of a promised march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye ;

And let him know so.

Captain.

I will do't, my lord.

Fortinbras. Go softly on.

[Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.

Hamlet. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Captain. They are of Norway, sir. 10

Hamlet. How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Captain. Against some part of Poland.

Hamlet. Who commands them, sir?

Captain. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Hamlet. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Captain. Truly to speak, and with no addition,

We go to gain a little patch of ground

That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 20

Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole

A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Hamlet. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Captain. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Hamlet. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw :

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Captain. God be wi' you, sir.

[*Exit.*

Rosencrantz.

Will 't please you go, my lord?

Hamlet. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. 31

[*Exeunt all except Hamlet.*

How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge ! What is a man,

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.

Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,

Looking before and after, gave us not

Rosencrantz

That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event, 40
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do ;'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me :
Witness this army of such mass and charge
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event, 50
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men, 60
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth ! [Exit.

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, *and a Gentleman.*

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gentleman. She is importunate, indeed distract :
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Gentleman. She speaks much of her father ; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her heart ;
Spurns enviously at straws ; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense : her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection ; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ; 10
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much, unhappily.

Horatio. 'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she may
strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in. [*Exit Horatio.*]
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20

Re-enter HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

Ophelia. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark ?

Queen. How now, Ophelia !

Ophelia. [*Sings*] *How should I your true love know
From another one ?*

*By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.*

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Ophelia. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings] *He is dead and gone, lady,*

He is dead and gone ;

30

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia, —

Ophelia. Pray you, mark.

[Sings] *White his shroud as the mountain snow, —*

Enter KING.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Ophelia. [Sings] *Larded with sweet flowers ;*

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

40

Ophelia. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Ophelia. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,*

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine.

50

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,

And dupp'd his chamber-door ;

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

King. Pretty Ophelia !

Ophelia. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't :

[Sings] *By Gis and by Saint Charity,*

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't, if they come to't; 60

By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

You promised me to wed.

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

An thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Ophelia. I hope all will be well. We must be patient : but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it : and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach ! Good night, ladies ; good night, sweet ladies ; good night, good night. [Exit.

King. Follow her close ; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit *Horatio.*

O, this is the poison of deep grief ; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain :
Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove : the people muddied, 80
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him : poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts :
Last, and as much containing as all these,

Her brother is in secret come from France ;
 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death ; 90
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
 Gives me superfluous death. *[A noise within.*

Queen. Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

Enter another Gentleman.

What is the matter?

Gentleman. Save yourself, my lord.

The ocean, overpeering of his list,
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head, 100
 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;
 And, as the world were now but to begin,
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,
 They cry ' Choose we : Laertes shall be king : '
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds :
 ' Laertes shall be king, Laertes king ! '

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry !
 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs ! 109

King. The doors are broke. *[Noise within.*

Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following.

Laertes. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laertes. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will. [*They retire without the door.*

Laertes. I thank you : keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father !

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laertes. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me
bastard,
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

120

Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person :
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.

Laertes. Where is my father ?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laertes. How came he dead ? I'll not be juggled with :
To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil !
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit !
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes ; only I'll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.

130

King. Who shall stay you ?

Laertes. My will, not all the world :
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far but little.

King. Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty
 Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge, 140
 That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
 Winner and loser?

Laertes. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laertes. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
 And like the kind life-rendering pelican,
 Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
 Like a good child and a true gentleman.
 That I am guiltless of your father's death,
 And am most sensibly in grief for it,
 It shall as level to your judgement pierce 150
 As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within*] Let her come in.

Laertes. How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter OPHELIA.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
 Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
 By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
 Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
 O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
 Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine 160
 It sends some precious instance of itself
 After the thing it loves.

Ophelia [*Sings*] *They bore him barefaced on the bier;*

Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;

And in his grave rain'd many a tear:—

Fare you well, my dove!

Laertes. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Ophelia. [Sings] *You must sing a-down a-down,
As you call him a-down-a.*

170

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laertes. This nothing's more than matter.

Ophelia. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laertes. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Ophelia. There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end, —

[Sings] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*

Laertes. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Ophelia [Sings] *And will he not come again?*

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead:

Go to thy death-bed:

190

He never will come again.

His beard was white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

[*Exit.*

Laertes. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction ; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

200

Laertes. Let this be so ;
His means of death, his obscure funeral —
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation —
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

210

King. So you shall ;
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter HORATIO *and a* Servant.

Horatio. What are they that they would speak with me?

Servant. Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

Horatio. Let them come in. [Exit Servant.]

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

First Sailor. God bless you, sir.

Horatio. Let him bless thee too.

First Sailor. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. 11

Horatio [Reads] '*Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.*

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters; 28
 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
 To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter KING and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
 And you must put me in your heart for friend,

Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laertes. It well appears : but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd, 10
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself —
My virtue or my plague, be it either which —
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him ;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20
Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laertes. And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that : you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull 31
That we can let our beard be shook with danger

And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :
 I loved your father, and we love ourself ;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —

Enter a Messenger.

How now ! what news ?

Messenger. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
 This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

Messenger. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not :
 They were given to me by Claudio ; he received them 40
 Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.
 Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

[Reads] ‘*High and mighty, You shall know I am set
 naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see
 your kingly eyes : when I shall, first asking you pardon there-
 unto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange
 return.*

HAMLET.’

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?
 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?

Laertes. Know you the hand ?

King. ’Tis Hamlet’s character. ‘Naked !’
 And in a postscript here, he says ‘alone.’ 51
 Can you advise me ?

Laertes. I’m lost in it, my lord. But let him come ;
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,
 That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
 ‘Thus didest thou.’

King. If it be so, Laertes —
 As how should it be so ? how otherwise ? —
 Will you be ruled by me ?

Laertes.

Ay, my lord ;

So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd, 60

As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it, I will work him

To an exploit, now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall :

And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice

And call it accident.

Laertes.

My lord, I will be ruled ;

The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

King.

It falls right.

You have been talk'd of since your travel much, 70

And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality

Wherein, they say, you shine : your sum of parts

Did not together pluck such envy from him

As did that one, and that, in my regard,

Of the unworthiest siege.

Laertes.

What part is that, my lord ?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,

Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes

The light and careless livery that it wears

Than settled age his sables and his weeds,

Importing health and graveness. Two months since, 80

Here was a gentleman of Normandy : —

I've seen myself, and served against, the French,

And they can well on horseback : but this gallant

Had witchcraft in't ; he grew into his seat ;

And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,

As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured

With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laertes. A Norman was't?

King. A Norman.

90

Laertes. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

Laertes. I know him well : he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you : the scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this, —

100

Laertes. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laertes. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father ;
But that I know love is begun by time ;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;

110

And nothing is at a like goodness still,
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much : that we would do,
We should do when we would ; for this 'would' changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ; 120
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer : —
Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words ?

Laertes. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence 130
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you, in fine, together
And wager on your heads : he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laertes. I will 'do't :

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank, 140
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death

That is but scratched withal : I'll touch my point
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
 It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this ;
 Weigh what convenience both of time and means
 May fit us to our shape : if this should fail,
 And that our drift look through our bad performance, 150
 'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
 Should have a back or second, that might hold,
 If this should blast in proof. Soft ! let me see :
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings :
 I ha't :
 When in your motion you are hot and dry —
 As make your bouts more violent to that end —
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
 A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, 160
 Our purpose may hold there.

Enter QUEEN.

How now, sweet queen !

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laertes. Drown'd ! O, where ?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;
 There with fantastic garlands did she come
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them : 170
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;

When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide ;
And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up :
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes ;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element : but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death. 180

Laertes. Alas, then, is she drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laertes. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord :
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it. [Exit.

King. Let's follow, Gertrude : 190

How much I had to do to calm his rage !

Now fear I this will give it start again ;

Therefore let's follow. [Exeunt.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

SCENE 1.

- l. 18. "Out of **haunt**," — out of *company*.
 l. 42. "As level as the cannon to his **blank**," — to *its mark*.

SCENE 2.

- l. 12. "What **replication** should be made," — what *reply*.

SCENE 3.

- l. 31. "How a king may go a **progress**," — may make a *ceremonial journey, in royal state*.
 l. 41. "Which we do **tender**," — *cherish, regard*.
 l. 45. "The associates **tend**," — *await, attend*.
 l. 62. "Thou may'st not coldly **set**," — *estimate*.

SCENE 4.

- l. 27. "This is the **imposthume** of much wealth," — *sore, abscess*.
 l. 36. "With such large **discourse**," — *power of reasoning*.
 l. 39. "To **fust** in us unused," — to *grow mouldy*.

SCENE 5.

- l. 9. "The hearers to **collection**," — to *inference, conclusion*.
 l. 37. "**Larded** with sweet flowers," — *garnished, bedecked*.
 l. 41. "Well, God 'ild you," — God *reward* you.
 l. 82. "We have done but **greenly**,
 In **hugger-mugger** to inter him" — we have acted *foolishly* in
 secretly burying him.
 l. 94. "Like to a **murdering-piece**," — a *cannon* loaded with small
 bullets and scraps of iron.
 l. 98. "The ocean, **overpeering** of his list," — *rising* above its *bounds*.
 l. 109. "O, this is **counter**," — running on a *false scent*.
 l. 185. "**Thought** and **affliction**," — "*thought*" here in sense of
 melancholy.

SCENE 6.

- l. 23. "Yet they are too light for the **bore** of the matter," — for the *importance* of the matter.

SCENE 7.

- l. 18. . . . "The great love the **general gender** bear him," — the *masses* of the *common people*.
- l. 21. "Convert his **gyves** to graces," — his *fetters*.
- l. 42. "I am set **naked** on your kingdom," — *unattended*.
- l. 61. "As **checking** at his voyage," — *objecting* to his voyage.
- l. 66. "Shall **uncharge** the **practice**," — shall *acquit* the *plot* of blame.
- l. 75. "Of the unworthiest **siege**," — *rank*.
- l. 99. "The **scrimers** of their nation," — the *fencers*.
- l. 116. . . . "Growing to a **plurisy**," — to *excess*.
- l. 137. "A sword **unbated**," — *unblunted, without a button*.
- l. 142. "No **cataplasm** so rare,
Collected from all **simples**," — no *poultice* made from all *herbs*.
- l. 169. "That **liberal** shepherds" — *licentious, free-spoken* shepherds.
- l. 177. "**Incapable** of her own distress," — *unknowing, unconscious*.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A churchyard.*

Enter two Clowns, with spades, etc.

First Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Second Clown. I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

First Clown. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

Second Clown. Why, 'tis found so.

First Clown. It must be '*se offendendo*'; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

Second Clown. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver, —

First Clown. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes, — mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Second Clown. But is this law?

20

First Clown. Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

Second Clown. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

First Clown. Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown. Was he a gentleman?

First Clown. A' was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clown. Why, he had none.

First Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged: ' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

Second Clown. Go to.

First Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Second Clown. The gallows-maker; for that frame out-lives a thousand tenants.

41

First Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

Second Clown. 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

First Clown. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Second Clown. Marry, now I can tell.

First Clown. To 't.

Second Clown. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

First Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you

are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker : ' the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan : fetch me a stoup of liquor. [*Exit Second Clown.*

[*He digs, and sings.*

*In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract O, the time, for, ah, my behove, 60
O, methought, there was nothing meet.*

Hamlet. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

First Clown. [Sings]

*But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[*Throws up a skull.*

Hamlet. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder ! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ?

Horatio. It might, my lord.

Hamlet. Or of a courtier ; which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it ; might it not ? 81

Horatio. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, e'en so : and now my Lady Worm's ;

chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

First Clown. [Sings]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,

For and a shrouding sheet:

O, a pit of clay for to be made

90

For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull.*]

Hamlet. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Horatio. Not a jot more, my lord.

Hamlet. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Horatio. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Hamlet. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

III

First Clown. Mine, sir. —

[Sings] *O, a pit of clay for to be made*

For such a guest is meet.

Hamlet. I think it be thine, indeed ; for thou liest in 't.

First Clown. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours : for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

Hamlet. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

First Clown. 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Hamlet. What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clown. For no man, sir.

Hamlet. What woman, then?

First Clown. For none, neither.

Hamlet. Who is to be buried in 't?

First Clown. One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she's dead. 128

Hamlet. How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it ; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

First Clown. Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Hamlet. How long is that since?

First Clown. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Hamlet. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clown. Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

Hamlet. Why?

First Clown. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet. How came he mad?

First Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet. How strangely?

First Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

150

Hamlet. Upon what ground?

First Clown. Why, here in Denmark : I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Hamlet. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

First Clown. I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die — as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in — he will last you some eight year or nine year : a tanner will last you nine year.

Hamlet. Why he more than another?

First Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while ; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now ; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

Hamlet. Whose was it?

First Clown. A whoreson mad fellow's it was : whose do you think it was?

Hamlet. Nay, I know not.

First Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

170

Hamlet. This?

First Clown. E'en that.

Hamlet. Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio : a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy : he hath borne me on his back a thousand times ; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. — Where be your gibes now?

your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horatio. What's that, my lord?

Hamlet. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Horatio. E'en so.

Hamlet. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull.*]

Horatio. E'en so, my lord. 190

Hamlet. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Horatio. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Hamlet. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel? 200

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king,

Enter Priests, etc., in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, etc.

The queen, the courtiers: who is that they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken

The corse they follow did with desperate hand

Fordo its own life : 'twas of some estate.

209

Couch we awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with Horatio.*]

Laertes. What ceremony else?

Hamlet. That is Laertes, a very noble youth : mark.

Laertes. What ceremony else?

First Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty : her death was doubtful ;

And, but that great command o'ersways the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,

Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her :

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,

220

Her maiden strewments and the bringing home

Of bell and burial.

Laertes. Must there no more be done?

First Priest. No more be done :

We should profane the service of the dead

To sing a requiem and such rest to her

As to peace-parted souls.

Laertes. Lay her i' the earth :

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring ! I tell thee, churlish priest,

A ministering angel shall my sister be,

When thou liest howling.

Hamlet. What, the fair Ophelia ! 230

Queen. Sweets to the sweet : farewell ! [*Scattering flowers.*]

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife ;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laertes. O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

240

Hamlet. [Advancing] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane!

[Leaps into the grave.]

Laertes.

The devil take thy soul!

[Grappling with him.]

Hamlet. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.

250

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,—

Horatio. Good my lord, be quiet.

[The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.]

Hamlet. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son, what theme?

Hamlet. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

260

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Hamlet. 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do :

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I :

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

270

Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness :

And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,

His silence will sit drooping.

Hamlet. Hear you, sir ;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever : but it is no matter ;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

279

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

[*Exit.*

King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[*Exit Horatio.*

[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience in our last night's
speech ;

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

This grave shall have a living monument :

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.**Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*

Hamlet. So much for this, sir : now shall you see the other ;
You do remember all the circumstance ?

Horatio. Remember it, my lord !

Hamlet. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep : methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall : and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will, —

10

Horatio. That is most certain.

Hamlet. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them ; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again ; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio, —
O royal knavery ! — an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho ! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

20

Horatio.

Is't possible ?

Hamlet. Here's the commission : read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed ?

Horatio. I beseech you.

Hamlet. Being thus be-netted round with villanies, —
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, 30
They had begun the play — I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair :
I once did hold it, as our statistes do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service : wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote ?

Horatio. Ay, good my lord.

Hamlet. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish, 40
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'As'es' of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Horatio. How was this seal 'd ?

Hamlet. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal ; 50
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Horatio. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Hamlet. Why, man, they did make love to this employment ;
They are not near my conscience ; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow :
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes 60
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Horatio. Why, what a king is this !

Hamlet. Does it not, thinks 't thee, stand me now upon —
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage — is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil? 70

Horatio. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

Hamlet. It will be short : the interim is mine ;
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his : I'll court his favours :
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Horatio. Peace ! who comes here? 80

Enter OSRIC.

Osric. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Hamlet. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

Horatio. No, my good lord.

Hamlet. Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess : 'tis a chough ; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osric. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty. 91

Hamlet. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

Osric. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Hamlet. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

Osric. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Hamlet. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osric. Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry, — as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head : sir, this is the matter, — 103

Hamlet. I beseech you, remember —

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.*]

Osric. Nay, good my lord ; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing ; indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see. 110

Hamlet. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him

to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror ; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osríc. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Hamlet. The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

121

Osríc. Sir ?

Horatio. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do't, sir, really.

Hamlet. What imports the nomination of this gentleman ?

Osríc. Of Laertes ?

Horatio. His purse is empty already ; all's golden words are spent.

Hamlet. Of him, sir.

Osríc. I know you are not ignorant —

Hamlet. I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir ?

Osríc. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

Hamlet. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Osríc. I mean, sir, for his weapon ; * but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

Hamlet. What's his weapon ?

140

Osríc. Rapier and dagger.

Hamlet. That's two of his weapons : but, well.

Osríc. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses : against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so ; three of the carriages, in faith, are very

dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Hamlet. What call you the carriages?

Horatio. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done. 151

Osric. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Hamlet. The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

Osric. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Hamlet. How if I answer 'no'? 163

Osric. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Hamlet. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits. 170

Osric. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

Hamlet. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osric. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Hamlet. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Horatio. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Hamlet. He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he — and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on — only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out. 185

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Hamlet. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now. 192

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Hamlet. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Hamlet. She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*

Horatio. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Hamlet. I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Horatio. Nay, good my lord, —

Hamlet. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman. 205

Horatio. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Hamlet. Not a whit, we defy augury : there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all : since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ?

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, *and* Attendants *with foils, etc.*

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.*]

Hamlet. Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

With sore distraction. What I have done,

That might your nature, honour and exception

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

220

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet :

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness : if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd ;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

230

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

Laertes. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most

To my revenge : but in my terms of honour
 I stand aloof ; and will no reconcilment,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

Hamlet.

I embrace it freely ;

240

And will this brother's wager frankly play.
 Give us the foils. Come on.

Laertes.

Come, one for me.

Hamlet. I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance
 Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
 Stick fiery off indeed.

Laertes.

You mock me, sir.

Hamlet. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
 You know the wager ?

Hamlet.

Very well, my lord ;

Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :

250

But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laertes. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Hamlet. This likes me well. These foils have all a
 length ?

[*They prepare to play.*]

Osric. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
 Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire ;
 The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
 And in the cup an union shall he throw,

260

Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
 The cannons to the heavens, the heavens the earth,
 ' Now the king drinks to Hamlet ! ' Come, begin :
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Hamlet. Come on, sir.

Laertes. Come, my lord. [*They play.*]

Hamlet. One.

Laertes. No.

Hamlet. Judgement.

Osric. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laertes. Well ; again.

King. Stay ; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine :
 Here's to thy health.

[*Trumpets sounds, and cannon shot off within.*]

Give him the cup. 271

Hamlet. I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile.

Come. [*They play.*] Another hit ; what say you ?

Laertes. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows :

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Hamlet. Good madam,

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me.

King. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup : it is too late. 280

Hamlet. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laertes. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't.

Laertes. [*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

Hamlet. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laertes. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*

Osric. Nothing, neither way. 289

Laertes. Have at you now!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they
change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*

King. Part them; they are incensed.

Hamlet. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls.*

Osric. Look to the queen there, ho!

Horatio. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

Osric. How is't, Laertes?

Laertes. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Hamlet. How does the queen?

King. She swoonds to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Ham-
let,—

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies.*

Hamlet. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd!
Treachery! Seek it out! 300

Laertes. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life:
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and evenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

Hamlet. The point envenom'd too !

Then, venom, to thy work !

[*Stabs the King.*

All. Treason ! - treason !

311

King. O, yet defend me, friends ; I am but hurt.

Hamlet. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion ! Is thy union here ?

Follow my mother !

[*King dies.*

Laertes.

He is justly served ;

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet :

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me !

[*Dies.*

Hamlet. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !

321

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time — as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest — O, I could tell you —

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead ;

Thou livest ; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Horatio.

Never believe it :

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :

Here's yet some liquor left.

Hamlet.

As thou'rt a man,

330

Give me the cup : let go ; by heaven, I'll have't,

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story.

[*March afar off, and shot within.*

What warlike noise is this ?

Osric. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Hamlet. O, I die, Horatio ; 340
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [Dies.

Horatio. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet
prince ;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !
Why does the drum come hither? [March within.

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors,
and others.

Fortinbras. Where is this sight?

Horatio. What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search. 351

Fortinbras. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

First Ambassador. The sight is dismal ;
And our affairs from England come too late :
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
Where should we have our thanks?

Horatio. Not from his mouth,
 Had it the ability of life to thank you : 361
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to view ;
 And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
 How these things came about : so shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
 Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters, 370
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I
 Truly deliver.

Fortinbras. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Horatio. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more : 380
 But let this same be presently perform'd,
 Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mischance,
 On plots and errors, happen.

Fortinbras. Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have proved most royally : and, for his passage,
 The soldiers' music and the rites of war
 Speak loudly for him.
 Take up the bodies : such a sight as this

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

390

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*[A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies;
after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.]*

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

SCENE I.

- l. 3. "Make her grave **straight**," — *straightway, at once.*
 l. 12. "Argal," — *Ergo, i.e. therefore.*
 l. 86. "To play at **loggats** with 'em," — play *ninepins.*
 l. 93. "His **quiddities** now, his **quilllets**," — his *nice questions and distinctions.*
 l. 99. "The **fine** of his fines," — *end of his fines.*
 l. 133. "He galls his **kibe**," — *chilblain.*
 l. 204. "The winter's **flaw**," — *blasts of wind.*
 l. 219. "**Shards**, flints, and pebbles," — *sherds, broken bits of pottery.*
 l. 220. . . . "Her virgin **crants**," — *garlands.*
 l. 264. "Woo't drink up **eisel**?" — *vinegar.*
 l. 275. "When that her golden **couplets** are **disclosed**," — her yellow brood are *hatched.*

SCENE 2.

- l. 6. . . . "The **mutines** in the **bilboes**," — the *mutineers* in the *stocks.*
 l. 22. . . . "Such **bugs** and goblins," — such *bugbears.*
 l. 33. . . . "As our **statists** do," — our *statesmen.*
 l. 88. . . . "'Tis a **chough**," — *coarse boor.*
 l. 107. "Full of most **excellent differences**," — conjectured to mean, "full of *different excellencies*" (points of excellence).
 l. 113. "But **yaw** neither, in respect of his quick sail," — Hudson says is equivalent to, "would be but a *slow and staggering* process, *compared* to his swift sailing."
 l. 117. "His **umbrage**, nothing more," — nothing can follow nor imitate ("*trace*") him save his *shadow* ("*umbrage*").
 l. 150. "By the **margent**," — by *marginal references, explanations.*
 l. 153. "More **german** to the matter," — more *appropriate.*
 l. 167. "'Tis the **breathing-time** of day," — time for *exercise.*
 l. 204. "A kind of **gain-giving**," — *misgiving.*
 l. 260. "And in the cup an **union**," — a large *pearl.*

- l. 287. . . . "You make a **wanton** of me," — a *child* of me.
- l. 345. . . . "With the **occurrents** . . . which have **solicited**," — the *events* which have *excited* me.
- l. 352. . . . "This **quarry**," — this *heap of dead*.

ACT I.



QUESTIONS.

SCENE I.

What are the circumstances attending the opening of this scene?

Was it correct for Bernardo to first address Francisco?

What is shown by his being the first to speak?

Why did Bernardo cry "Long live the king!"?

What is the especial significance of Bernardo's desire to know whether or not Francisco's watch had been quiet?

Why was Bernardo anxious for the arrival of Horatio and Marcellus?

What difference may be observed, in the earlier part of the scene, between the temperament of Horatio and of his companions?

Why should there have been a difference?

Why was Horatio chosen as spokesman to the ghost?

Why assign such a task to a "scholar"?

Is the appropriateness of styling Horatio a "scholar" verified by any circumstance in the scene?

Was Horatio sceptical regarding the ghost's appearance?

What effect was produced upon him when he first saw it?

Upon how many previous occasions had the ghost appeared?

How did Horatio account for its coming to earth again?

Did Bernardo's theory coincide?

Upon what ground did Horatio base his reasons?

How did Horatio's second reception of the ghost differ from his first?

In what ways did he conjure it to speak to him?

Was he successful?

What caused the ghost to depart so suddenly?

What plan was agreed upon to compel the ghost to speak, if it should appear again?

From the words of Horatio, describe what had been the recent affairs of the Danish kingdom.

How had Denmark become possessed of some of Norway's territory?

Why were the nightly guards maintained about the palace?

How is the particular night described upon which the ghost appeared?

What is the significance of so describing it?

Was there any suggestion of the true reason for the ghost's appearance?

What could have been the purpose of the ghost in appearing to the officers of the guard, and not to Francisco?

Why, above all, did it appear to Horatio?

Where is the hero of the play first mentioned?

Is anything mentioned regarding his age?

What has been brought forward in the development of the play by the first scene?

SCENE 2.

What relation to Hamlet was the present king of Denmark, before marrying the queen?

What was the name of the deceased king?

What is Hamlet's deportment and apparel when he is introduced in the play?

Why did the queen rebuke him?

What was the principal cause of Hamlet's grief?

Who felt the more sincere sorrow over the death of the late king, Hamlet or his mother?

How long had the king been dead when his wife again married?

What difference is to be seen between Hamlet's replies to his mother and to the king?

In the speech of the king to the court, what do we learn regarding affairs of the kingdom?

Who was Laertes?

Whence had he come to Denmark, and what had brought him?

Whence had Hamlet come to the court?

Was the king anxious to retain or dismiss him?

What possible reason for his anxiety?

What had made Hamlet and Horatio such friends?

Had they come from Wittenberg together or at different times?

Upon Hamlet's saying "Methinks I see my father," why did Horatio so suddenly exclaim "Where, my lord?"?

How did Horatio manage to introduce the matter of the ghost's appearance?

How did Hamlet act upon receiving such news?

Did he show any doubt as to the truth of his friend's tale?

Did he hesitate in deciding what steps to take?

What is the character of the questions propounded by him to gain the particulars of the ghost's appearance?

Did the eye-witnesses agree entirely in their accounts?

Previous to hearing Horatio's story, what was the principal cause for Hamlet's hatred of the king?

What suspicion rushed to his mind when he heard of the ghost's visitation?

From what has been seen of Hamlet thus far, what estimate may be formed of his character?

What has been added to the plot of the story by this second scene?

SCENE 3.

What new and important character is introduced in this scene?

What were the relations existing between Hamlet and Ophelia?

What was Laertes' opinion regarding the intentions of the prince?

Why did he bid Ophelia be upon her guard, even if Hamlet were honorable in his intentions towards her?

How did he advise that she act?

Was Laertes inclined to receive advice from his sister?

Had Ophelia confidence in Hamlet's love for her?

Did Polonius' opinion regarding Hamlet's love for his daughter coincide with that of Laertes?

How did Ophelia keep her promise to Laertes, that their conversation regarding Hamlet should be a guarded secret?

Can her action be justified?

What is the character of Polonius' advice to Laertes, as the latter sets out on his journey?

Which of his own precepts did the old man violate while giving his advice?

Among his numerous maxims, which was pre-eminently the best?

Why was this long harangue to Laertes peculiarly — even absurdly — out of place at this particular time?

How has the foregoing scene advanced the plot?

SCENE 4.

What was the nature of the night upon which Hamlet and two of his companions determined to await the ghost?

How did it compare with the night when Francisco was found on guard, in the first scene?

Why was the question raised concerning the exact hour of the night?

How did Hamlet express his want of respect for the reigning king?

What is the substance of his words about forming estimates of men's characters?

What means has Shakespeare taken to bring the ghost suddenly upon the watchers, notwithstanding their expectation of seeing it?

Upon its appearance, was there any hesitation on the part of Hamlet in addressing it?

How did the ghost's deportment toward Hamlet differ from its behavior to the other watchers on a previous occasion?

Who had the greater confidence in the ghost, Hamlet or his companions?

What former witness was now absent?

What reasons did Hamlet give for not fearing to follow the ghost?

Why did Horatio endeavor to dissuade him?

Were the attempts of Horatio and Marcellus to detain Hamlet confined to words?

What did Marcellus think portended by the repeated appearance of the ghost?

Who, on a previous occasion, had made a similar conjecture?

Was the ghost willing to converse with Hamlet in the presence of witnesses?

Does this scene bring forward any new phase of the prince's character?

SCENE 5.

Alone, in the presence of the ghost, did Hamlet show any fear?

In which realm of the dead did the ghostly king describe himself located?

What had been reported as the cause of the king's death?

Why had it been easy to maintain the truth of such a report?

Describe the method used in murdering the king.

Had the idea of murder yet come to Hamlet's mind?

How did he receive the announcement?

What is the significance of his exclamation, "O my prophetic soul! My uncle!"?

Did Hamlet hesitate to undertake the task of revenge?

How did the murdered king consider the attainments of his brother as compared with his own?

Did he consider that his brother's greatest crime lay in the mere act of murdering him?

In his directions to Hamlet, what two particular warnings were emphasized?

What is the significance of the first?

What circumstance led the ghost to retire?

What caused its departure on the previous occasion?

Show how the character and future of Hamlet were completely changed by what he had learned in this interview.

What resolution did he take?

In what manner did he greet his friends when they came in search of him?

How may his words be accounted for?

To what oath did he bind Horatio and Marcellus?

How did he particularly warn them to be watchful of their behavior?

Explain the importance of such a warning.

What was Horatio's opinion of Hamlet's department?

How did Hamlet's parting words to the ghost, when heard for the last time below the platform, differ from his previous mode of addressing him?

Why was Hamlet's position, after the interview with the ghost, particularly difficult to maintain before the world?

Where in this scene are found traces of the teachings of the Church?

Briefly, what has been presented by the first act?

OBSERVATIONS.

SCENE 1.

Coleridge bids us observe the peremptoriness of Francisco at the opening of this scene—a proof of his being in a perturbed state of mind. Men are never so peremptory as when startled. Notice how much less sharp are the challenges and answers when the two men are on guard, than when Francisco stood alone.

Coleridge also calls attention to the artistic way in which the absolute silence at the opening of the scene is restored, when Horatio, after his greetings, sits down with the others to hear, at this late hour, in this chilly, ghostly spot, the tale of the spectral visitant related by those who had actually beheld it.

SCENE 2.

Observe the natural gradation of questions and answers whereby Horatio introduces the somewhat delicate matter of having seen the ghost of Hamlet's father; also, the simple, natural, and at the same time important questions put by Hamlet himself, in gaining the particulars of the narrative.

Coleridge notes the set and antithetic style of the king's expression when he touches upon that "which galled the heel of conscience," but his almost majestic diction when he mentions matters of state.

SCENE 3.

There is a great difference of opinion regarding the intentions of Shakespeare in his delineation of certain characters who are prominent in this scene.

Some think that his object was not to belittle Polonius, by displaying his senility, but to make the aged lord-chamberlain, by his superficiality, a contrast to the earnest, deep-souled young prince. Other critics maintain that Polonius is simply a refinement of the comic element demanded in every play by the fun-loving occupants of the pit. After the death of Polonius, this element is furnished by the clowns in the churchyard scene.

In respect to the character of Ophelia, critical estimates go to even greater lengths of contrariety than in the case of her father. They vary from those which interpret her replies to her brother and her father, in this scene, as the outspakings of true, womanly innocence, suspecting no insincerity from the prince, to those which would rate her a doll — a puppet — and her replies nothing more than the empty responses of a mind incapable of producing anything more material.

In continuing the play, let the student bear these different views in mind, and make his own inferences as to which may be the true one, from the development of the plot.

SCENE 4.

“The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakespeare’s minute knowledge of human nature. . . . This dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries, obliquely connected, indeed, with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock, and so forth. The same desire to escape from the impending thought is carried on in Hamlet’s account of, and moralizing on, the Danish custom of wassailing. . . . By thus entangling the attention of the

audience in the nice distinctions and parenthetical sentences of this speech of Hamlet's, Shakespeare takes them completely by surprise on the appearance of the ghost. . . . No modern writer would have dared, like Shakespeare, to have preceded this last visitation by two distinct appearances, — or could have contrived that the third should rise upon the former two in impressiveness and solemnity of interest." — COLERIDGE.

SCENE 5.

"The duty of avenging his father's death is entrusted to him [Hamlet], and this at a moment when he realizes fully his own isolation and the untrustworthiness of mankind. What line he will take is the problem to be worked out. This, time alone will show. . . . Meanwhile Hamlet has to form his first plan of action. To act at once on such evidence [the ghost's story] might be the part of a madman, but never of a philosopher. To appear as before with such a secret upon his mind was equally out of the question. So he decides to gain time by counterfeiting madness, and imparts just a hint to his friends to keep their counsel, and not to betray his secret by word or deed." — RANSOME.

"And when the ghost has vanished, who is it we see standing before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A born prince, feeling himself favored in being summoned to punish the usurper of his crown? No! Amazement and sorrow overwhelm the solitary young man; he becomes bitter against smiling villains, swears never to forget the departed, and concludes with the significant ejaculation :

"The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!"

In these words, I imagine, is the key to Hamlet's whole procedure, and to me it is clear that Shakespeare sought to depict a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it. In this view I find the piece composed throughout. Here is an oak-tree planted in a costly vase, which should have received into its bosom only lovely flowers; the roots spread out, the vase is shivered to pieces." — GOETHE'S "*Wilhelm Meister*"; CARLYLE'S *translation quoted by* FURNESS.

FAMILIAR PASSAGES.

SCENE 1.

“For this relief much thanks.”

“And then it started like a guilty thing,
Upon a dreadful summons.”

“Whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.”

SCENE 2.

“A little more than kin, and less than kind.”

“All that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.”

“That it should come to this!”

“Frailty, thy name is woman!”

“In my mind’s eye, Horatio.”

“He was a man, take him all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.”

“A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.”

“Give it an understanding, but no tongue.”

“Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o’erwhelm them, to men’s eyes.”

SCENE 3.

“Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff’d and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.”

“Give thy thoughts no tongue.”

"Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;
 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

 Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all: to thine own self be true,
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man."

SCENE 4.

"It is a nipping and an eager air."

"But to my mind, though I am native here,
 And to the manor born, it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance."

"Angels and ministers of grace, defend us !"

"Unhand me, gentlemen.

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me !"

SCENE 5.

"I am thy father's spirit,
 Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
 And for the day confined to fast in fires,
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
 Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
 To tell the secrets of my prison house,
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porpentine."

"O my prophetic soul."

“Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.”

“Leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her.”

“Meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.”

“There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.”

“O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!”

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

“The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!”

ACT II.



QUESTIONS.

SCENE I.

What may have been Shakespeare's purpose in introducing this trivial episode of Polonius and Reynaldo?

Upon what errand was Polonius sending Reynaldo to Paris?

How did he direct Reynaldo to proceed, in order to find the method in which Laertes was spending his time?

What tale did Ophelia bring to her father about the actions of Hamlet?

How did Polonius straightway interpret the prince's deportment upon this occasion?

Can any other interpretation be given?

SCENE 2.

What means were taken by the king and queen to reach the true cause of Hamlet's melancholy?

To what causes did they think it probably due?

In assigning these causes, is there reason to think that the queen felt any sensation of guilt?

Is any difference apparent between the king's and the queen's address to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

Why were these two men selected for sounding Hamlet?

Wherein lies the humor of Polonius' speech, beginning with the words, "My liege and madam"?

Do either the queen or the king appear sensible of Polonius' wandering senility?

In the opinion of Polonius how had Hamlet reached his state of madness?

Was the old lord-chamberlain confident of his own perspicacity?

Did the king share in his confidence of the true cause of the prince's malady?

How did Polonius propose to demonstrate to the king the truth of the matter?

What indelicacy did the old man show in his plan?

What did Polonius represent to the king and queen as having been his advice to Ophelia?

What was his object in making this known to them?

In Hamlet's conversation with Polonius, are the prince's remarks the senseless and disjointed words of a man out of his mind?

How did they appear to Polonius?

What strengthened him in his theory of the cause of Hamlet's madness?

What words of Hamlet showed that he understood the prying purpose of Polonius?

What was the prince's estimate of the old courtier?

Was his harshness and want of respect necessary for the part which he was acting?

Do his words with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern show that Hamlet had considerable of the misanthropic element in his nature, — then, at any rate?

To what causes did his two friends assign his melancholy?

Could they conceal their real errand from him?

In his apparently free confession to his friends what did he conceal?

Was his hint of his madness being assumed, a weak admission?

Observe in their future conversations with the monarch, if they seem to have grasped the full force of the hint.

What persons now had reason to know that Hamlet was acting a part?

Did any of them know, or suspect the true cause?

How did Hamlet belie his own words, "Man delights not me"?

Give a reason why the scene recited by the player should have been selected by Hamlet, by showing a correspondence between the scenes therein contained, and those actually going on at the Danish court.

How did Hamlet's deportment, upon the arrival of the players, contrast with his previous words and actions?

How did the criticisms of Hamlet and Polonius upon acting compare with each other?

Why did Hamlet, when alone, heap reproaches upon himself?

How did his determination to await the testimony of the play show the justice of his self-denunciation?

In what way did he justify to himself the postponement of his vengeance?

Compare the spirit shown in Hamlet's words, Act I, Scene 5, beginning, "O all you host of heaven! O earth!" with the spirit underlying his soliloquy at the close of the present scene. From this comparison show what was the most serious weakness against which he had to contend.

By this act, what side of the prince's character has been emphasized?

What by the first act?

How has the plot been furthered by this scene?

OBSERVATIONS.

SCENE 1.

It has been said that Shakespeare's purpose of introducing the episode of Polonius and Reynaldo, narrated in this scene, was twofold. First, to serve as a short relief to the minds of the audience, after the exciting events at the close of the preceding act; and, secondly, to present the internal rottenness of the society of the Danish court, explaining some of Hamlet's subsequent action.

SCENE 2.

Compare the following two remarks on a passage of this scene: ". . . This gave Hamlet a good opportunity to begin impressively the play of his feigned madness, and sometime after the appearance of the ghost . . . the Prince startled poor Ophelia by coming before her in a slovenly dress,—he who was usually a dainty man in his apparel,—and by wild and melancholy actions; after which he left her, sighing deeply, but not speaking. She told this to her father, who, immediately inferring that the Prince was mad for his daughter's love, spread the report about the palace."

—WHITE.

". . . Hamlet's belief in humanity has received a third shock. Already he has found his uncle a murderer, his mother unfaithful to his father, and the murderer and seducer wearing the crown of his father amidst the applause of his countrymen. There is, however, one person in whom he yet believes—Ophelia, the love of his youth. To her he has gone in his affliction; but what has happened. 'She, as her father commanded, did repel his letters and denied

him access.' For Hamlet there could only be one possible explanation of her conduct. She must be turning to him the cold shoulder because he has lost his crown. Such, in all probability, is the true explanation of Hamlet's conduct. It is under the influence of this idea that he visits her, and goes through the speechless leave-taking so pathetically described." — RANSOME.

"There is a kind of genealogical necessity in the character. . . . Hamlet seems the natural result of the mixture of father and mother in his temperament, the resolution and persistence of the one, like sound timber worm-holed and made shaky, as it were, by the other's infirmity of will and discontinuity of purpose. . . . As with Hamlet, so it is with Ophelia and Laertes. The father's feebleness comes up again in the wasting heart-break and gentle lunacy of the daughter, while the son shows it in a rashness of impulse and act, a kind of crankiness, of whose essential feebleness we are all the more sensible as contrasted with a nature so steady on its keel, and drawing so much water as that of Horatio." — LOWELL.

"Hamlet doubts everything. He doubts the immortality of the soul, just after seeing his father's spirit, and hearing from its mouth the secrets of the other world. He doubts Horatio even, and swears him to secrecy on the cross of his sword, though probably he himself has no assured belief in the sacredness of the symbol. He doubts Ophelia, and asks her, 'Are you honest?' He doubts the ghost, after he has had a little time to think about it, and so gets up the play to test the guilt of the king." — *Ib.*

FAMILIAR PASSAGES.

SCENE I.

“This is the very ecstasy of love.”

SCENE 2.

“Brevity is the soul of wit.”

“More matter, with less art.”

“That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis 'tis true.”

“Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.”

“Still harping on my daughter.”

“Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.”

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

“Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks.”

“What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!”

“They [players] are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.”

“Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?”

“What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?”

“The devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape.”

ACT III.



QUESTIONS.

SCENE I.

How did Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's report of their colloquy with Hamlet vary from the truth?

Had any encouragement been given by the king or queen whereby Polonius could expect a favorable consideration of the marriage of his daughter to Hamlet?

How was Claudius affected by Ophelia's words, "We are oft to blame in this," etc.?

Had he before betrayed any compunction for his crime?

Where had Hamlet before considered the subject of suicide?

What was his principal objection to death?

What is the substance of his soliloquy?

What may Hamlet have meant by suddenly exclaiming, "Ha, are you honest?" (See "Observation" on this passage, at end of the scene.)

Accepting the theory presented on this passage, how may one account for the rambling remarks of Hamlet, which follow?

What words of Hamlet show that he is still dallying with his inward purpose of avenging his father's murder?

Show whether the words of Ophelia in this scene with

Hamlet are consistent with both of the views brought out in the "Observations" on Scene 1 of Act II.

What feelings on her part prompted the words regarding the downfall of the prince's mind?

Was the king's confidence in Polonius' theory accounting for the cause of Hamlet's melancholy strengthened by the interview between Ophelia and the prince?

Did Polonius still cling to his former theory?

What did the lord-chamberlain suggest as the best means of dealing with Hamlet?

Did the king accept the suggestion?

SCENE 2.

What was the substance of Hamlet's directions to the players?

Was his language that of an unsound mind?

What was his estimate of flattery?

What traits in Horatio's character had caused Hamlet to select him as his friend?

In what respects did Horatio's and Hamlet's natures differ?

What was the arrangement into which the two friends entered, concerning the play?

How far, now, did Horatio understand Hamlet's secret?

What was Hamlet's treatment of Polonius throughout this scene?

What purpose could he have had in drawing the old man into the discussion regarding the shape of the cloud?

What thought had Hamlet in saying that the prologue was as brief "as woman's love"?

What was the name of the play to be presented at the court?

What effect upon the king had its performance?

Did he witness it throughout?

Was it necessary for Hamlet and Horatio to compare notes, as they had planned, in order to establish the king's guilt? Why?

Had Hamlet now any reason for further hesitation in executing the enjoined vengeance upon his step-father?

Why did he not act at once?

What effect upon Hamlet did the success of his stragem have?

What reason did Hamlet give Rosencrantz to explain the cause of his "distemper"?

What meaning may have been lurking in the words "I lack advancement"?

Had he given a similar reason for his strange behavior upon any previous occasion to the same person?

How did his true estimate of Rosencrantz appear here?

Where previously in this act has Hamlet used the simile comparing man with a musical pipe?

In the interview with his mother, which she had demanded, what deportment towards her did Hamlet hope that he might maintain?

At what former occasion had he been warned to contrive naught against her?

Show how Hamlet's true character is brought out by his words when he was left alone by Polonius.

SCENE 3.

Did Guildenstern and Rosencrantz prove true friends of Hamlet?

What induced Polonius to act as spy at Hamlet's interview with the queen?

Did the king enjoy peacefully the results of his crime?

Was he a man devoid of conscience?

How did he endeavor to regain mental rest?

Why did he feel that prayer for forgiveness could be of no avail to him?

How does the scene where Hamlet discovers the king praying in the oratory, bring out the prince's prevailing weakness of character?

Why did Hamlet hesitate in then performing the act of vengeance?

Had the king hesitated, for a similar reason, to commit murder?

How many proofs have now been presented, in the course of the play, that Claudius was the slayer of his brother?

Had the king been slain at this time, show how Hamlet might easily have defended his action.

Has punishment, thus far, assailed any of the guilty parties?

SCENE 4.

What was the deportment of Hamlet towards his mother at the commencement of the interview?

In what light did he show her marriage to be particularly odious?

Is the king's death attributed to the queen's present husband anywhere in the interview?

Did Hamlet in any way intimate that his mother was privy to the murder?

Has it thus far been intimated?

When Hamlet ran his sword through the arras, what thought was uppermost in his mind?

Why should he not have hesitated again, as he did when he discovered the king at prayers in the oratory?

Give a reason for the ghost's appearance during the dialogue.

What former injunction did it repeat to the prince?

From one particular, wherein the ghost's appearance here differed from that on the previous occasions, some have claimed that we have here, not the actual ghost, but a "coinage of the brain" of Hamlet: what is the difference?

What did Hamlet consider the cause which brought his father again to earth?

How did he endeavor to prove to his mother that the ghost was no phantom aroused by his excited imagination?

What effect upon the queen did his reproving words have?

What change is evident in the manner of Hamlet towards his mother after the ghost's departure?

When did his filial love appear the more strongly, before or after?

What was his main reason for desiring that she should not again go to the king upon that particular night?

In what light did he view the killing of Polonius?

Was he fully informed regarding the plans for sending him to England?

Why did he intend to offer no resistance?

Did he trust his former school friends?

What result was gained by the interview with the queen?

Who has proved the first victim in the holocaust to be offered in avenging the king's murder?

OBSERVATIONS.

SCENE I.

“Ha, ha! are you honest?” — “Here it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia, that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy.” — COLERIDGE.

Discussing the cruel and almost brutal words of Hamlet to Ophelia in this scene, White says that at the outset Hamlet addressed her in his ordinary kind manner; he soon, however, recalled his cue of simulated madness and vented his cynical humor, by denying his love for her and reviling her sex. “His conduct on this occasion was so hard and cruel, and so far from any semblance of madness, that some of those who have studied his case have concluded that he must have discovered that the King and Polonius were overhearing him. But there is no warrant for such an opinion, which indeed is suggested only as a support to the indefensible assumption that Hamlet, being good at heart, his conduct must have been always thoroughly estimable and consistent; whereas there are no graver offences or grosser errors than those into which kind-hearted men fall from lack of resolution. This, poor Hamlet saw himself, . . . and he declared, that of all men, these were most blessed who were so constituted that they could not be made the sport of fortune, and that the man whom he took to his inmost heart must be one who, like Horatio, was not the prey of his own emotions.”

“His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the

effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distraction of the scene around him ! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When ‘his father’s spirit was in arms,’ it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of. It would have taken him years to come to a direct explanation on the point. In the harassed state of his mind, he could not have done much otherwise than he did.” — HAZLITT.

SCENE 3.

Hamlet’s hesitation in slaying his uncle while at his devotions in the oratory, has been considered by Johnson as proceeding from mere fiendishness. This view has been violently assailed by other commentators.

SCENE 4.

In the old “Hystorie of Hamblet,” from which Shakespeare probably drew the plot of his tragedy, the queen disclaims all knowledge of the murder of the former king.

FAMILIAR PASSAGES.

SCENE I.

“To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurs
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.”

“ Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.”

“ O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown !
The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s eye, tongue, sword.”

“ The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers ! ”

“ Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.”

SCENE 2.

“ Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant; it outhers Herod: pray you, avoid it.”

“ Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as ’twere, the mirror up to nature.”

“ Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man
As ere my conversation coped withal.”

“ They are not a pipe for fortune’s finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of hearts.”

“ ’Tis brief, my lord.”

“ As woman’s love.”

“ Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.”

“’Tis as easy as lying.”

“ It will discourse most eloquent music.”

“’Tis now the very witching hour of night,
When churchyards yawnd and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world.”

SCENE 3.

“ O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t,
A brother’s murder.”

“ With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May.”

SCENE 4.

“ A king of shreds and patches.”

“ This is the very coinage of your brain :
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.”

“ Look here, upon this picture, and on this.”

“ Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on.”

“ I must be cruel, only to be kind :
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.”

“ For ’tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar.”

ACT IV.



QUESTIONS.

SCENE I.

Did the queen observe Hamlet's request not to again see the king on the night of the interview?

What idea did she endeavor to convey to her husband regarding Hamlet's mental condition?

Did she report it as she actually believed it to be?

What difficulty occurred to the king as likely to result from the murder of Polonius?

What personal danger did he apprehend from the prince's condition?

What speedy arrangements did he make to avert this personal danger?

Did the queen attempt to prevent the removal of Hamlet from court?

SCENES 2 AND 3.

Why was Hamlet's manner to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern so changed from what it had been when they first returned to court?

What reason did the king give for hesitating to put Hamlet in confinement at home?

What may have been reasons for Hamlet's popularity with the Danes?

How did the king explain to Hamlet the necessity for speedily escaping from the country?

Did any of Hamlet's words show that he comprehended the true reason?

Why did he offer no objection to going?

What reason did the king have for choosing England as Hamlet's destination?

Is there anything to show that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern understood the real object of the voyage?

Who, thus far, has gained the greater advantage, Hamlet or the king?

SCENE 4.

What was the object of introducing into the play this scene of Fortinbras' troops on the way to battle?

When and under what circumstances had the permission been given to young Fortinbras to lead his troops through Denmark?

Was Hamlet yet placed under restraint by his attendants?

What did this episode of his journey suggest to the mind of the prince?

At what resolution did he arrive?

Was it a new one for him to form?

SCENE 5.

What effect upon Ophelia's mind had the murder of her father?

Why was Horatio anxious that the queen grant an interview with Ophelia?

Give a reason why the queen at first was unwilling?

Throughout the utterances of Ophelia what two ideas are most prominent?

What five reasons did the king give for his uneasiness of mind?

What popular emotions had been aroused by the sudden death of Polonius?

How are the natures of Hamlet and Laertes contrasted by the occurrences of this scene?

What was the predominating trait of Laertes' temperament?

What would probably have been the result if Laertes had been in the place of Hamlet?

What was the action of the queen upon Laertes' sudden entrance?

What may be said of the deportment of the king, throughout the interview?

Has he here, or elsewhere, betrayed cowardice?

Was the true account of Polonius' death publicly known?

What circumstances had led Laertes to believe the king his father's murderer?

Had he seen Ophelia previous to the interview with the king?

What have thus far been the unfortunate results of Hamlet's lack of determination?

SCENE 6.

Had the king yet suspected Horatio of being especially well informed regarding the inner history of the Danish court?

What reason had probably caused Hamlet not to desire Horatio as his companion on his trip to England?

What are the general contents of Hamlet's letter?

To what new revelation does he refer in his letter, which is to startle Horatio when he learns it?

What words in the letter have led some critics to believe that the capture by the pirates was a pre-arrangement of Hamlet's?

What previous incidents of the play have shown that upon sudden emergency the prince could throw aside his irresolution and become a man of action?

SCENE 7.

How had the king quieted the anger which Laertes at first felt towards him?

What reasons did he give for not having proceeded publicly against the prince?

Were his reasons true ones?

In directing the wrath of Laertes from himself to Hamlet, had the king any purpose beyond his own safety?

Did the king explain to Laertes what action he had taken towards punishing Hamlet?

In explaining the actions of the prince, did the king make any exaggerations?

Show that, for an instant, upon the arrival of the messenger announcing Hamlet's return to Denmark, the king was at a loss what course to pursue.

Upon recovering himself, what change did he make in his plans for the removal of the prince?

What new light is shed upon the character of Laertes by his entering into the plans of the king?

How does the king himself, in this scene, present a contrast to his deportment upon previous occasions in the play?

By what means did the king urge Laertes on into becoming his accomplice?

Was Laertes backward in falling in with the king's ideas?

What means are taken by Shakespeare of removing from Laertes all sympathy on the part of the audience?

In case of Laertes' failure, what further design did the king conceive for the removal of Hamlet?

Was the queen admitted into complicity with the plot?

In what way are the king's words a satire on the action of Hamlet, when he urges on Laertes the necessity of immediate action, and the folly of awaiting special fitness of time or place?

What was the purpose of Shakespeare in announcing, at the end of this conversation, the sudden death of Ophelia?

What great contrasts in character are emphasized in this scene?

Show what results have thus far been brought about by the irresolution of Hamlet.

OBSERVATIONS.

SCENE 5.

“In every respect Laertes’ thought is wrong and Hamlet’s is right. So long as it was a question of evidence, the heedlessness of Laertes emphasizes the wisdom of Hamlet’s caution; but when we get to action the parts are reversed, and the decision and activity of Laertes, who was wrong, show up the hesitation and supineness of Hamlet, who was right.”
— RANSOME.

SCENE 6.

The expression in Hamlet’s letter to Horatio, “But they knew what they did,” has been thought to prove that the capture of Hamlet was not accidental, but a prearranged plan of his own. Clearly, however, it does not refer to the capture, but to the “mercy shown him afterwards. . . . Hamlet saw how he could turn the accident to account, and had persuaded the pirates to assist him in the plan. As Snider has said, his own account (in V. 2) of the adventure with the pirates refutes the notion that it was a device of his own.” — ROLFE.

SCENE 7.

“Shakespeare understood perfectly the charm of indirectness, of making his readers seem to discover for themselves what he means to show them. If he wishes to tell them that the leaves of the willow are gray on the under side, he does not make it a mere fact of observation by bluntly saying so, but makes it picturesquely reveal itself to us as it might in nature: —

“There is a willow grows athwart the flood,
That shows his *hoar* leaves in the glassy stream.”

— LOWELL.

FAMILIAR PASSAGES.

SCENE 2.

“A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.”

SCENE 3.

“Diseases desperate grown,
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.”

SCENE 5.

“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.”

“Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes.”

“When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.”

“There's such a divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would.”

SCENE 7.

“That we would do,
We should do when we would.”

ACT V.



QUESTIONS.

SCENE I.

Why should such characters have been introduced into the play as the two clowns?

What other character, earlier in the play, furnished the comic element?

Why should Christian burial have been refused Ophelia?

What rites of the church were omitted at her funeral?

Was it certain whether she had died accidentally, or by her own hand?

What view of Hamlet's character was brought out by his conversation with Horatio, beside the grave?

Did Horatio manifest any sympathy with Hamlet's imaginative conjectures?

What evidence is furnished in this scene, regarding the age of Hamlet?

Who was Yorick?

How old would Hamlet have been when Yorick died?

In the conversation with the clown did Hamlet prove the superior in wit?

What brought the king to the graveyard?

Why did Hamlet and Horatio not advance at once, upon the approach of the funeral procession?

Did Hamlet know that Ophelia was dead?

What first revealed to him that this was Ophelia's funeral?

How did the prince know that the funeral ceremonies were those of a suicide?

Who, besides Hamlet and Laertes, showed sincere grief over Ophelia's death?

How did Laertes' manifestation of grief accord with his temperament, as brought out on previous occasions?

What two sides of Hamlet's character are exhibited in the graveyard scene?

What does this scene seem to show regarding his feelings for Ophelia?

Did Hamlet have any friendship for Laertes?

Was he able to explain Laertes' hostile demonstrations?

Did he know anything of the king's new design against his life?

How did the king warn Laertes that their plot was not forgotten?

Upon how many persons did Hamlet feel that he could rely for true friendship?

SCENE 2.

At the opening of the last scene, Hamlet is interrupted describing what, to Horatio?

What remarks of Hamlet show that he was inclined to believe in fatalism?

Narrate the circumstances whereby Hamlet turned the tables upon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

How did he become separated from them?

What prompted Hamlet to investigate their papers?

How did he obtain the royal seal for his forged letter?

Previous to doing so, had he lacked proof of the purpose of their errand?

Had he proof that they themselves were privy to the contents of the letters of the king?

Was their death necessary for his own safety?

Why did he feel no compunction in dealing with them as he did?

In what way did he show himself less unmerciful in their case, than he had previously been to the king?

Why did he regret his action toward Laertes at the grave of Ophelia?

Who was Osric?

What sort of a character was he?

What may be said of Hamlet's stopping at this critical moment to hold Osric up to ridicule?

Did Hamlet and Horatio highly rate Laertes as a swordsman?

What was Horatio's counsel regarding the duel?

How did Hamlet answer him?

Had Hamlet any presentiment about the issue of the combat?

Contrast Hamlet's speech of reconciliation with Laertes and Laertes' reply.

How did the king carry out his part of the arrangement?

What were the terms of the wager upon which Hamlet and Laertes were to fight?

Describe the course of the duel.

Why did the king not give more attention to the queen after she had drunk of the poisoned cup?

Did Laertes show any scruple in taking the advantage of the prince?

Why did Horatio express such surprise at seeing the combatants wounded?

What fact first aroused in Hamlet's mind suspicion of foul play?

What was Laertes' parting spirit toward Hamlet?

Did the king, although aware of the nature of the poison on the foil, still believe that his wound was not dangerous?

Who first died from a wound made by the poisoned foil?

What was Hamlet's final reference to his mother?

What feeling did it show?

What was the meaning of Hamlet's final words to the court, "Had I but time," etc.?

What was Horatio's first intention when he saw his friend about to die?

Why did Hamlet make him change it?

What were the prince's parting directions?

Whom did he name as his successor?

Was there any reason for his choice?

What news had the English ambassadors come to announce?

Why did Horatio caution speedy announcement of Fortinbras' succession?

What did Fortinbras mean by saying that he had "some rights to memory" in the Danish kingdom?

Was the ultimate killing of the king by Hamlet really in furtherance of his father's command, or prompted by sudden frenzy?

Trace the calamities which have succeeded one another since Hamlet's failure to take advantage of his opportunity to kill the king in the third scene of the third act.

OBSERVATIONS.

SCENE I.

“Horatio is the only complete *man* in the play, — solid, well-knit, and true; a noble, quiet nature, with that highest of all qualities, judgment; always sane and prompt. . . . He seems one of those calm, undemonstrative men whom we love and admire without asking to know why, crediting them with the capacity of great things without any test of actual achievement, because we feel that their manhood is a constant quality, and no mere accident of circumstance and opportunity. Such men are always sure of the presence of their highest self on demand. . . . I do not believe that Horatio ever thought he ‘was not a pipe for Fortune’s finger to play what stop she please,’ till Hamlet told him so. . . . He is unconscious of his own peculiar qualities, as men of decision commonly are, or they would not be men of decision. When there is a thing to be done, they go straight at it, and for the time there is nothing for them in the whole universe but themselves and their object.” — LOWELL.

“The play is hardly consistent with respect to Hamlet’s age. In Act V., Sc. 1, l. 155–191, it is stated that he is thirty years old, while in the first Act he is spoken of as still quite youthful; yet only a few months have elapsed in the interval of time between the beginning and the end of the action. His profoundly reflective soliloquies point to an age certainly past early youth.” — DOWDEN.

SCENE 2.

Moberley thinks from Hamlet’s words, “Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,” etc., as he was describing to

Horatio the story of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, that his sending the courtiers to their doom was a matter of sudden rashness; if he had had the opportunity of changing them again, and if the pirates had not cut them asunder, he would probably have repented and cancelled the orders.

White, in his "Studies in Shakespeare," observes how negligent of his duty the prince is, when in the midst of all his troubles and distress, he becomes so envious of Laertes' reputation as a swordsman that he frequently wishes he might challenge him; "and he, the sworn avenger of his father, he who had a kingdom at stake, kept himself well in practice for a bout with foils."

"A lovely, pure, noble, and highly moral being, without the strength of mind that forms a hero, sinks beneath a load which it cannot bear and must not renounce. He views every duty as holy, but this one is too much for him. He is called upon to do what is impossible; not impossible in itself, but impossible to him. And as he turns and winds and torments himself, still advancing and retreating, ever reminded and remembering his purpose, he almost loses sight of it completely, without ever recovering his happiness." — GOETHE, in "*Wilhelm Meister*."

FAMILIAR PASSAGES.

SCENE I.

“Cudgel thy brains no more about it.”

“Has this fellow no feeling of his business?”

“A politician — one that would circumvent God.”

“Alas poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung these lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady’s chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that.”

“To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?”

“Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn’d to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.”

“Sweets to the sweet: farewell!”

SCENE 2.

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”

“It did me yeoman’s service.”

“Tis the breathing time of day with me.”

“A hit, a very palpable hit.”

“This fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest.”

“Report me and my cause aright.”

“I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.”

“The rest is silence.”

GENERAL QUESTIONS UPON THE PLAY.

Where was Elsinore, the scene of the opening of the play?

What famous scene in "Macbeth," in which the minds of the actors, after being under extreme tension, are suddenly interrupted by sounds from the outer world, just as in Act I., Scene 1, the unearthly atmosphere is suddenly dispelled by the crowing of the cock? Compare them.

Show the marked contrast between the opening of "Macbeth" and that of "Hamlet."

What was the deportment of Bernardo and Marcellus upon the first two occasions of their seeing the ghost, before they committed the secret to Horatio?

Show, from internal evidence of the play, that it was not an unprecedented thing in Hamlet's time for a king's brother to succeed to the throne, even when the deceased monarch was survived by male issue.

From what is presented of Ophelia in the scene wherein she is first brought forward (Act I., Scene 3), what conflicting views may be formed of her character?

Richard Grant White argues strongly against Hamlet's being a delicate, feeble person, as he is frequently portrayed, and believes him to have been a young man of splendid physique. The fourth scene of the first act furnishes him one of the strongest proofs of this theory. From what part does he draw his evidence?

Where in the second scene of the same act is a passage which has led the above critic to conjecture that Hamlet was dark haired, on the assumption that he resembles his father?

Show how in Act I., Scene 5, the theory is illustrated, that the terrible is always in close touch with the ludicrous.

Show that the story in the first act has been drawn with a view to climax.

How is the difference between ancient and modern civilization shown by the episode of young Fortinbras, related by the ambassadors in the second act?

What selfish purpose may have prompted Polonius to oppose, as he did, Hamlet's affection for Ophelia?

What meaning may be intended by the words of Hamlet to Polonius: "For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog," etc.?

What could Hamlet have meant by saying to his two friends (Act II., Scene 2): "Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason"?

Was there any hesitation or unwillingness on Ophelia's part in undertaking an interview with Hamlet, the king and Polonius being unseen witnesses?

How is her action to be accounted for?

The scene in the third act where Hamlet refuses to kill the king, whom he has found praying in the oratory, is sometimes termed the "climax of the entire play." Show the reason why it has been so called.

At this point in the play, what characters are arrayed against Hamlet in one way or another?

Why may we believe that the king did not feel convinced of Hamlet's madness when the queen reported the interview with her son, during which Polonius had been slain? (Act IV., Scene 1.)

In what way does Hamlet's willingness to accompany Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England present one of the crises of the play?

In the fifth scene of Act IV. what circumstance would lead us to believe that Hamlet could easily have gained possession of the Danish kingdom if he had had the determination to kill the king?

When Hamlet became the man of action, did his action arise from premeditation or occasion? Illustrate.

What explanation may be given for the tardiness in preparing the grave of Ophelia?

What fact shows that there was tardiness?

What incident in the closing scene showed that Hamlet, almost at the very moment of his death, was a young man of great power and strength?

Were there any of the number who met with violent deaths throughout the play that were not

“Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled”?

How did the king show that he fully realized Hamlet's fault of procrastination and feared no immediate danger, even when he learned that the prince had returned to Denmark from his voyage to England?

What reference to changes on the stage of his own time does Shakespeare introduce in the second act?

What is Goethe's famous opinion and estimate of the character of Hamlet? (See Observation, Act I., Scene 5.)

With what ground could Schlegel say that Hamlet was “open in the highest degree to an enthusiastic admiration of that excellence in others of which he himself is deficient”?

What censure has sometimes been made for an incongruity in Hamlet's speaking of the other world as “the undis-

covered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns," since this is contradicted by an event in the play?

Mention any anachronisms in the play?

What famous scene and passage of "Macbeth" is suggested by the king's words, Act III., Scene 3?—

"What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow?"

How does Hamlet's character show resemblance to that of his mother?

How to his father?

How, likewise, do the characters of Ophelia and Laertes illustrate heredity?

What victory is mentioned as having been achieved by the Danes upon the day when the prince was born?

If Shakespeare intended the tragedy of "Hamlet" to illustrate any moral, what was the moral?

What was the date of the earliest edition of "Hamlet"?

Whence is it generally supposed that Shakespeare drew the plot?

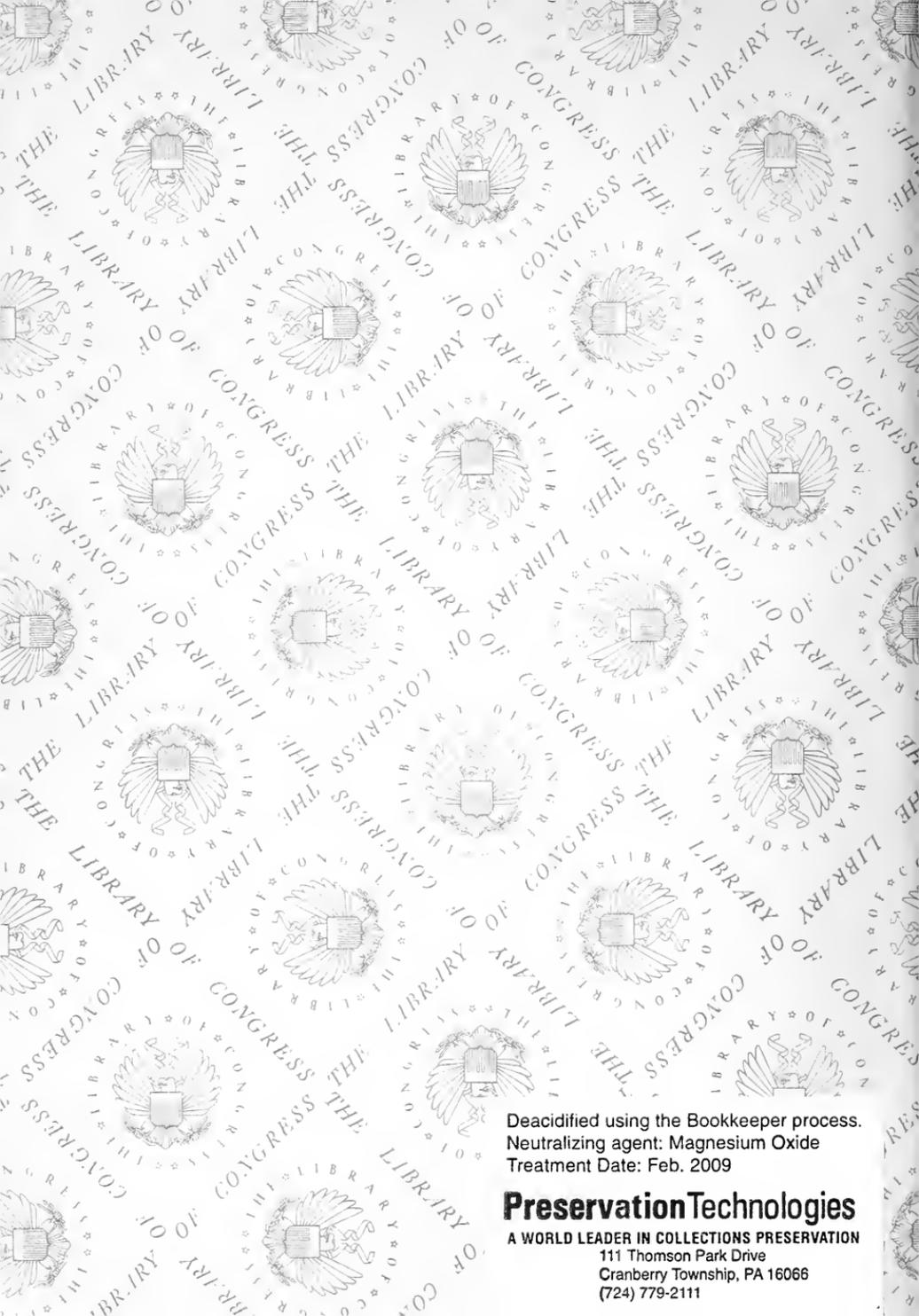
When he wrote this tragedy, did he follow in every respect the plot of the original?

Does "Hamlet" belong to Shakespeare's earlier or later writings?

What are sometimes called his "Four Great Tragedies"?

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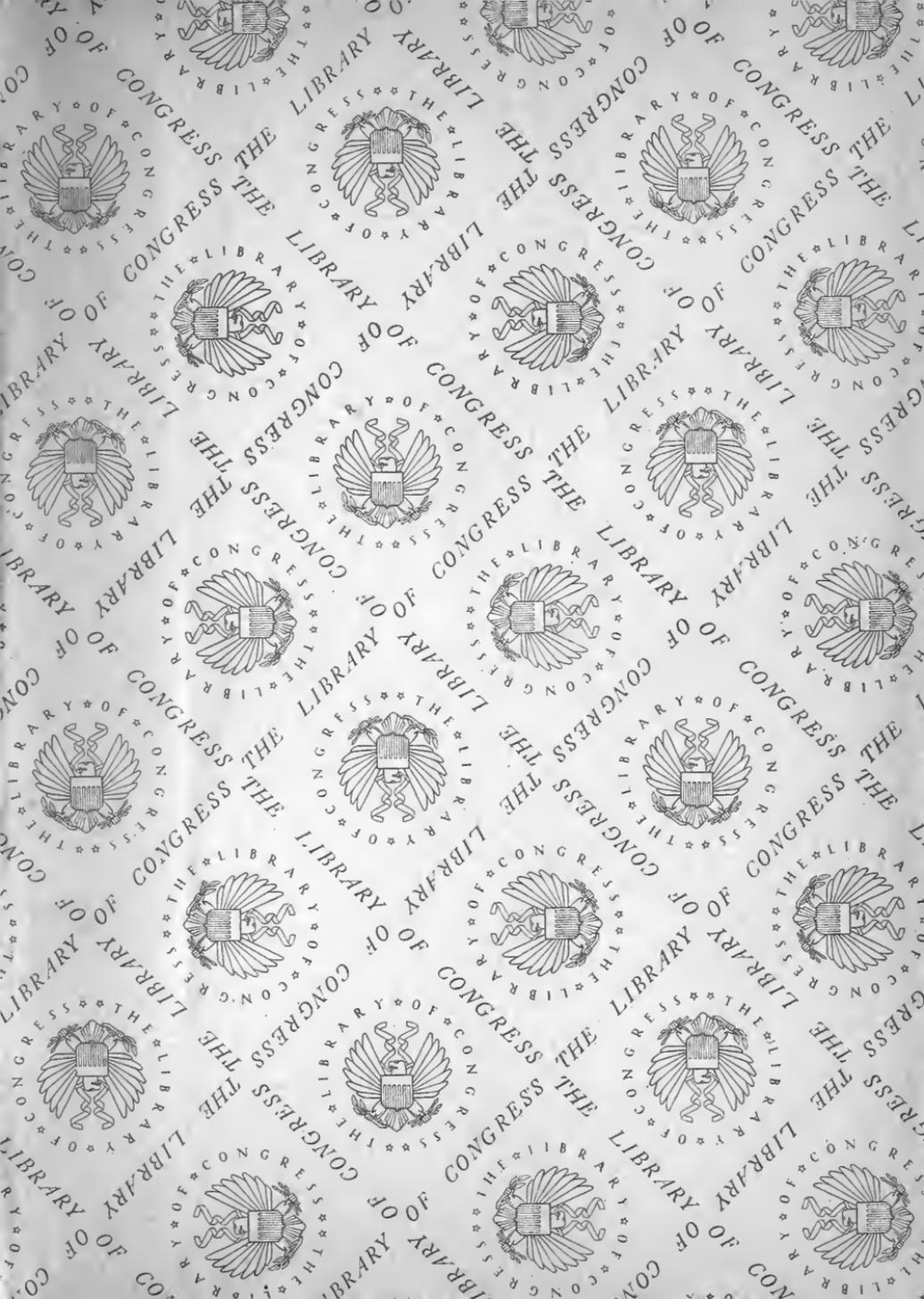


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